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SUMMER-FALL 1995, VOL. 11 NO. 3

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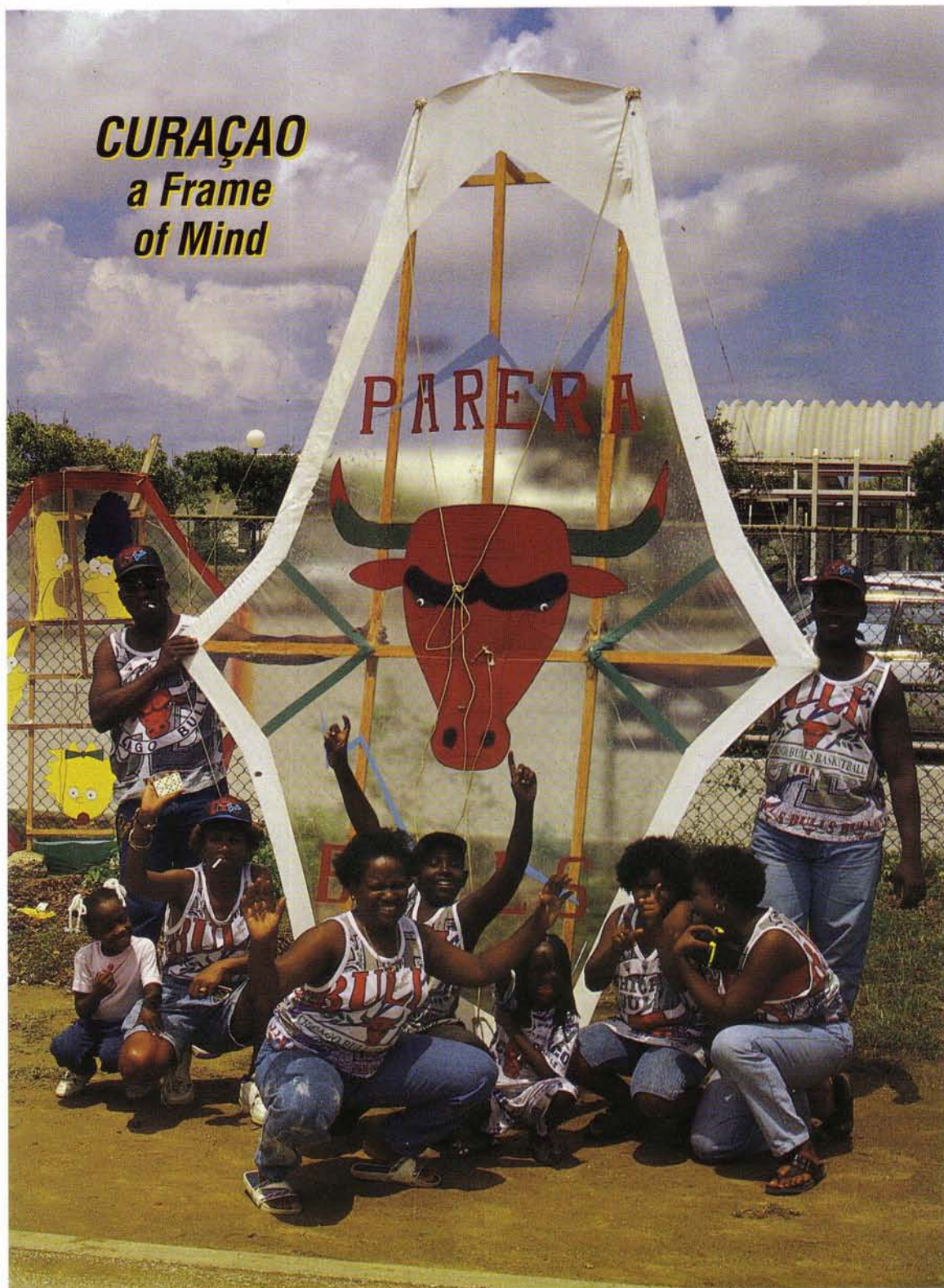
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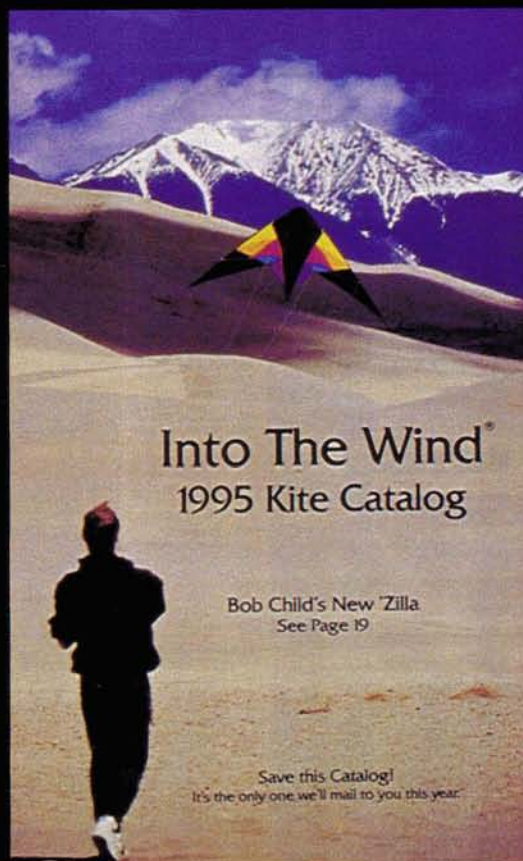
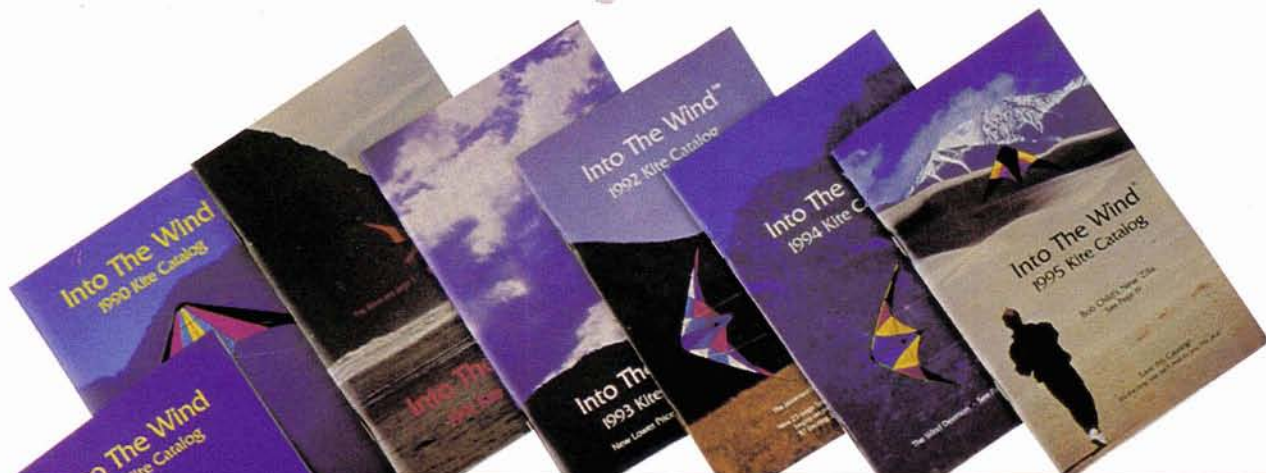
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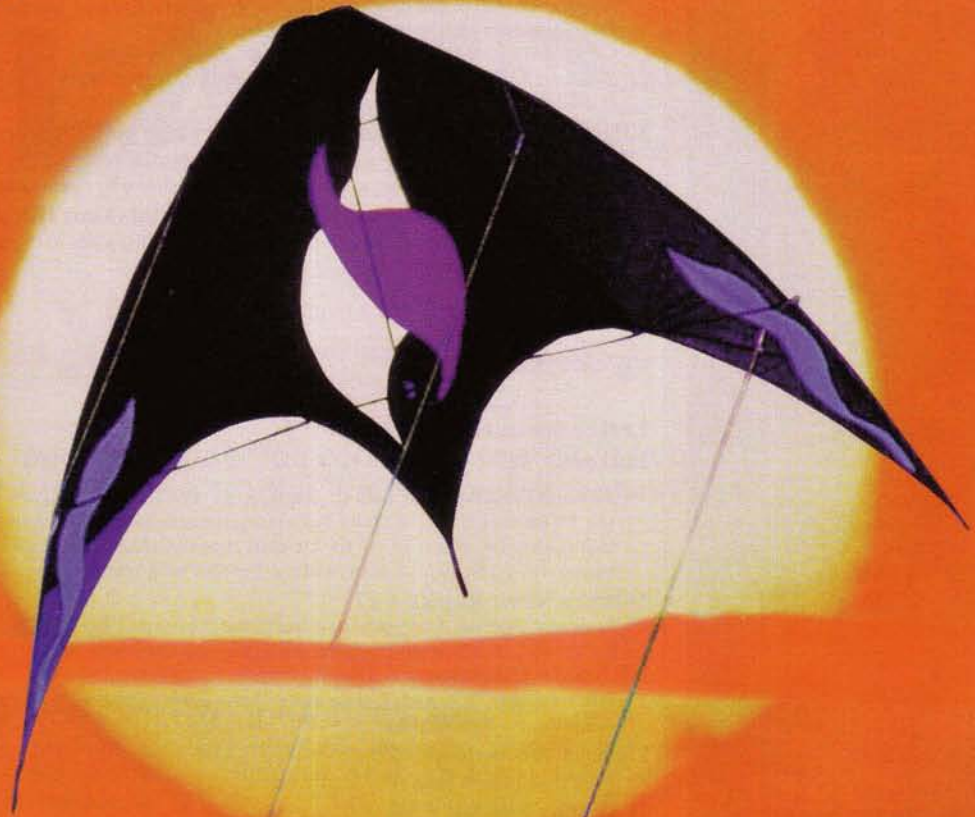
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# KiteLines

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"The Chicago Bulls," they call themselves—an enthusiastic neighborhood team in Curaçao, here posing with their big kite at the Curaçao International Kite Festival in April 1995. Photograph by Mel Govig.

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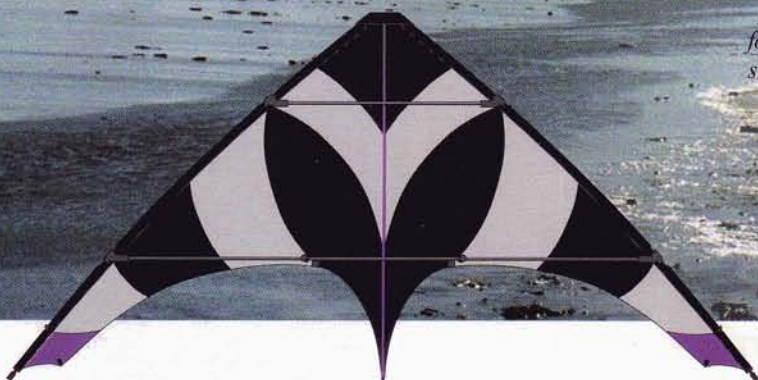
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Rec. line strenght: 25 - 70 kp / 50 - 150 lbs.

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# What Does "International" Mean?

**I**NTERNATIONAL: It's a nice big word, isn't it? Rolls around well on the tongue. No wonder so many kite festivals use it.

In fact, at least 40 festivals are now alive and well and calling themselves "international." Another 10 or so use the word "world" in their names. Usually these terms fit the events very well (that is, only a few have the nerve to label themselves "international" when only two or three countries are represented).

It's rather impressive. If all these events were neatly distributed over the annual calendar, there would be one for every week in the year. And that's only the festivals with "international" aspirations.

It could be debated that we have reached some kind of saturation point in international kite festivals, but I'll leave that for someone else to argue. What's interesting to me is the extent to which they differ.

Of course, some kite festivals are similar

to others, and the effect is reinforced when the organizers fail to involve local kitefliers. In these cases, the dozen-or-so "regulars" on the international kite circuit end up just meeting themselves again in another location and losing the chance to make friends with their foreign compatriots in the sky.

Luckily, only a few events are like this. Kite festivals are bringing us the differences we enjoy: differences in size (from thousands of people to dozens), in purpose (from tourism promotion to education), in budget (from a million dollars to a few hundred), in organization (from formal to informal), in atmosphere (from intense to relaxed), in kites (from big, flashy and "high-tech" to small, unassuming and "low-



Your editor on the field.

tech")—and so on. Wonderful diversity.

As we were putting this issue of *Kite Lines* together, we had the fleeting idea that we could group all the international kite festivals together and treat them as one big story. Not a chance. These events are like a train of wildly dissimilar kites: they won't line up like peas in a pod; they want to fly as divergently as possible.

So we had to show the festivals as the individual jewels that they are. In no way should they be held to any single standard. If you can travel to all of them (an exhausting thought!), you will find that every festival is unique. And if you can't travel to all of them—well, there's *Kite Lines*.

Make do and read.

*Valerie*



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**Last kite book read:** *Flying  
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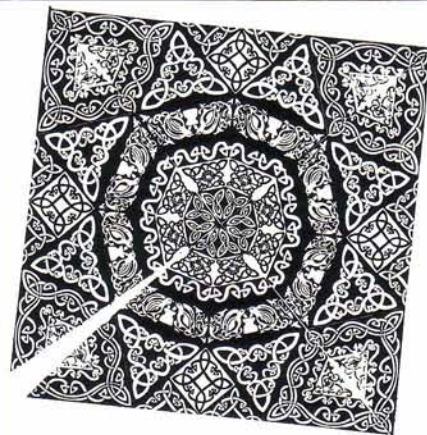
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# Revising & Revisiting

## Rotors & Other Names

Gary Engvall's letter (Winter-Spring 1995 *Kite Lines*) regarding autogyro and rotor kites is particularly interesting to me because I have been working on autogyro and rotor kites for some time. Early on, I realized I had to find words to describe the cause of lift and the means of stabilization for kites which had continuous motion in the air.

Because of Heinrich Magnus's discovery that a solid body, when rotating in fluid



**A spinning rotor, or rotary, kite with a center disk for stabilization.**

(gas or air), would generate a sideways movement, the rotor (or rotary) kite was easy to describe. The rotor, whether round, flat or circular, provided the lift, and adjacent disks or a dihedral would give lateral stability to the device. It would be a misnomer to call this kite a turbine or turbo, because a turbine is actually a motor, whether driven by steam, gas or water. A rotor, on the other hand, is simply a rotating member of a machine, and not a machine in itself.

An object which has a horizontal rotating member and rises in the air would normally be called a "helicopter" as defined by Leonardo da Vinci. However, the rotation in a helicopter is caused by motive power of some sort, which would exclude it from meeting the definition for a kite.

Early in this century Juan de la Cierva first provided a way to cause horizontal rotation without the use of a power source, meaning the lift was caused entirely by air



**Autogyro kite with fuselage and a horizontal wing.**

movement—which he named autogyro. Since the term "propeller" signifies forward movement, we would have to call the lifting-source in this case something else. I use the term "rotary blades" to distinguish them from propellers. So the lift in an autogyro is provided by rotary blades and stabilization is provided by horizontal and vertical fins on the body or fuselage.

To complicate matters, there is a third kite which has continuous motion while in the air. If you aren't familiar with kites of this

type, think of a windmill with rotating sails attached to a structure which remains in a stationary position. It is actually a keeled kite with the keel held upright by a tail or another device.



**A keeled kite with rotating sail.**

Since the rotational movement of the sails on this kite provide no lift, this kite is more difficult to name. Genetically it is a keeled kite with tail and rotating sail, but the best name I have come up with so far is "Rotating Kite" to try to distinguish it from "Rotor (or Rotary) Kite." "Autogyro Kite" describes the known kites with continuous movement. "Rotary Kite" should be an acceptable name, because rotary means having parts that rotate.

I didn't intend to write a letter this long—all I really wanted to say is we shouldn't call any kite a "Turbine" or a "Turbo."

—Ed Grauel

Rochester, New York, USA

## Hiroshima & Politics

In my naiveté I thought that kiting was apolitical. However, your precisely-timed (especially in light of the Smithsonian fiasco), one-sided and not-too-veiled political statement via Tal Streeter's quaint, anecdotal tale, "The Kitemaker of Hiroshima" (Winter-Spring 1995 *Kite Lines*) has proven otherwise.

Tal Streeter, a member of your Editorial Advisory Panel, elaborates on his shame, lack of courage and self-righteous pathos. I'd like to ask Tal Streeter if there were any kites and kitemakers in Manchuria and China prior to Japanese devastation and subjugation in the 1930s. In 1941 pre-invasion Pearl Harbor, perhaps?

How about some editorial equal time?

—Dominick M. Furlano

East Stroudsburg, PA, USA

**Editor:** It is generally our policy to avoid politics in our journal—there's plenty of it elsewhere. That's why your letter surprised us because in this case there was no connection intended, or even imagined, between Tal Streeter's supersensitive story and the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit. We had received Streeter's article years ago and

never had the space for it. When at last we found space, we ran it. It was that simple. The relationship you inferred was pure coincidence, unthought of until your letter came.

Incidentally, our Editorial Advisors see articles in advance of publication only if their specific expertise is needed. They are not responsible for selection of contents.

**Tal Streeter:** The piece on the Hiroshima kitemaker was written in 1989, prior to the brouhaha at the Smithsonian over the presentation of the Enola Gay.

I don't know the details of the Smithsonian incident, but from my standpoint, countries at war invariably succumb to the lowest levels of existence, wreaking violence on each other. I said once before, "I initially came to kites because it was, for me, as far from tanks as one could hope to go."

In 1994, I added a statement to "The Kitemaker of Hiroshima" to clarify my personal attitude. I was remiss in not bringing the earlier version in the *Kite Lines* files up to date.

"I had never possessed the courage to make a trip to Hiroshima, where the first A-bomb was dropped. It was not that I felt the United States had been any more or less culpable in its methods of waging war than the Japanese, but I simply abhorred the notion of this and all wars' inescapable savagery and inhumanity."

I have difficulty with the impassioned violence exercised in the name of religious beliefs in India, but write with love, I think, about the Indian people in my forthcoming book on Indian kites. I'm doing a book now about Chinese kites. Can you imagine the difficulty I have in writing about China in light of its policy toward Tibet (a country I revere) and the horrors of Tiananmen Square? Shall I indict the whole of China, including its kitemakers, for this policy? Believe me, the people of China, India, Japan and the United States are not one, undifferentiated, homogeneous mass. Let's not lump everyone together and throw out the good with the bad.

No, I am not above criticism, but I am not happy to be judged harshly in public statements. I'm distressed by simplistic finger-pointing. Though I appreciate your ardor, Mr. Furlano, I suggest you might better make time in your life to write positively about something dear to your heart: fly a kite or





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## LETTERS...Continued

two—and let the generously shared pleasures of the kite community replace the adrenaline rush of adversarial criticism.

### High Regard for Hargrave

There was one thing in the Hargrave story that was missing ("A Lift Into History")...The Australian \$20 bill has the picture of Hargrave on it, which attests to the high regard his countrymen had for him. I always regard Hargrave as the single innovator who made heavier-than-air flight more successful by the inclusion in the air frame of lateral flight surfaces. The "sidewalls" proved to be the answer to stability.

—Bob Ingraham

Founder, American Kitefliers Association  
Silver City, New Mexico, USA

*Editor:* It's good to hear from Bob, who is keeping his spirits up despite bad news from his doctor. Write to him at 315 N. Bayard St., Silver City, NM 88061, USA.

### Corrections & Clarifications

We regret several errors appeared in the Winter-Spring 1995 *Kite Lines*, as follows:

The location of the Buggy Boogie Thang II (January 14-95, 1996) was incorrect. The correct location is El Mirage Dry Lake, off Interstate Highway 15, near Victorville, CA.

In the What's New: Books department, the price for *Cuentos Poemas y Cometas (Stories Poems & Kites)* by Luis Reinaldo Escalante is \$8, not \$16.

In the article about Alex Mason a photo caption incorrectly identified Mike Simmons. The person assisting Alex is Sam Ritter of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

In Sky Gallery (featuring Scott Skinner), a photographer was not credited. Francis

Hall photographed the Attic Window Edo and the Jacob's Ladder multi-triangles kite.

In the data chart of our What's New: Kites section, sail loadings (oz./sq.ft.) are: for the Speed Limit, 1.97; for the Eddy, 0.48.

William R. Bigge of Germantown, Maryland supplies us with comments and corrections on the article "Spars: Making Your Best Picks" by Michael Graves. Bigge says:

The 'scale factor' is not defined, but on inspection of the chart it can be seen that the scale factor is numerically the fourth root (square root of the square root) of relative stiffness. This scale factor is the correct function to use in calculating the size of a kite with given spars to fly in a given wind.

For geometrically similar spars of the same material, the scale factor is proportional to the size. The chart covers a range of relative stiffness of a bit more than 16:1 and a range of scale factors slightly more than 2:1. The expected range (for geometrically similar spars) in weight/foot is 4:1. Not surprisingly, the larger spars are typically stiffer for their weight.

The last paragraph of Example 1 reads *should read:*

"We first look at the chart and find the relative-stiffness-values *scale factor* of the reference spar Clearwater 250-2 (0.600) (0.880), then find the scale factor for the AFC 2300 (0.995). These two values give you the relationship between the known and proposed leading-edge lengths. That is,  $0.995 / 0.6 = 1.658$   $0.995 / 0.88 = 1.13$ , so the leading edge of our new kite would be  $1.65 \times 64"$ , or  $106" 1.13 \times 64"$  or  $72"$

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# 4 Each: Stunters & One-Liners

By Michael J. Graves, Mel Govig & Valerie Govig

## Air Ballet & Airomatic

Tight Lines Kites is a small manufacturing operation run by John Shara in California. A recent startup, they offer several models of stunt kites, their first being the Air Ballet.

Breaking somewhat with the *Kite Lines* tradition, we decided to write two reviews in one, addressing both the Air Ballet and its smaller sibling, the Airomatic.

Tight Lines Kites, like a few others in the business, is run more like a craft studio than a kite factory. Each kite is hand-cut, sewn and tested by the designer. Our sample kites were superior in construction as you'd expect from such a company.

The sails are cut from 3/4-oz. nylon, with adequate reinforcements where necessary. The leading edges feature enclosed openings for the spreader, creating an unbroken edge that can't snag flying or bridle lines. The trailing edges are fitted with a Kevlar leech line along their entire length.

Both kites are fitted with pultruded carbon framing, including four carbon standoffs. The outboard standoffs are used to induce fixed wingtip "washout." The term "washout" describes a twist put into the wing as it tapers toward the wingtip. This twist causes the kite's angle of attack to vary across the wingspan, and can result in stable performance near the edge of the wind window. The upper spreaders are cushioned at the spine by a foam tube color-matched to each kite—a nice finicky touch.

The design places the lower spreader very low on the kite. This moves the center of gravity down and can make a kite stable in stalls and slides.

We flew the Air Ballet over three months under varied conditions. In most circumstances it flew on a 100-foot set of 80-lb Spectra lines, but in strong winds we used 130-ft 150-lb lines.

The Air Ballet is a very versatile kite: it flies well in winds as light as 3–4 mph, yet withstands a 15–18 mph breeze without incident. Given 6–8 mph of air, the kite handles superbly. Forward airspeed is a little faster than average, as is its speed in turns. Turning performance is admirable, tight but without any oversteer. The frame is quite stiff, which makes hard snap turns easy and reliable. While it tracks and turns well, the Air Ballet

is a bit too fast for use in precision competition. But the kite's fluid character and freestyle ability make it ideal for ballet performances. The kite passed our freestyle routine (which includes various axels, turtles, stalls and slides) with no problems.

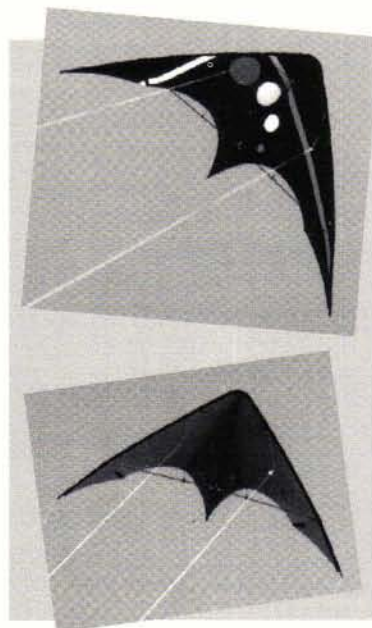
For its size, the Air Ballet is also nimble on the ground. Relaunching from various positions is not a problem, though the flying lines occasionally get caught on the end of the spine or the winglets formed by the outboard standoffs. The kite's relatively low aspect ratio permits most tumbling and cartwheels. With a very short wingtip, the Air Ballet is particularly good at vicious wingtip stabs.

Designing a kite with such a low center of gravity is not without its tradeoffs. In the lowest of its wind range, the Air Ballet tends to pitch in reaction to pumping the flying lines. This does demand the flier to adopt a smooth and constant flying style as the wind drops.

Now to compare the Air Ballet to its six-foot sibling, the Airomatic. Our sample Airomatic was framed in lighter weight carbon than the Air Ballet and had a single-color sail. This smaller kite seems most at home in winds over 6 mph, but we never encountered winds that overtaxed the kite. It was a challenge at times to keep up with such a fast-moving kite.

The Airomatic shares all of the qualities we enjoyed in the Air Ballet, but has a bit more of a radical nature. It is capable of extremely aggressive ground play, literally bouncing in tumbling moves. The Airomatic ought to make an impressive short stack, performing advanced maneuvers not normally associated with stacks.

The Air Ballet and Airomatic are two of the most entertaining dual-line stunt kites we have seen recently. Tight Lines Kites may not



Left panel: top, the Air Ballet moves nimbly; bottom, its sibling, the Airomatic, is a bit more radical.

Below, the omnidirectional quad-line Symphony turns at command.

Bottom, the 10-foot Maxima gives a credible performance for its size.



be available everywhere yet, but it is worth your effort to seek them out. —M.J.G.

## Symphony

We recognize that Revolution kites have set the standard for framed quad-liners. In fact, there are few alternatives to the Revolution and those that exist explore radically different design ideas, such as Synergy-Deca by Guildworks Flight Studio (reviewed in *Kite Lines*, Spring-Summer 1994). We're excited to find a new design in this category:

It's the Symphony by MerrickKites of New Jersey. One of the standouts at this year's Kite Trade Association convention, the Symphony is a patented quad-line design that had been under development for a number of years. At the 1992 Smithsonian Kite Festival it made its first public appearance when it won in its category.

The Symphony features top-quality materials and uncompromising construction. The sail is 1/2-oz ripstop polyester on a



wrapped graphite frame. The kite's design is simple, even elegant. Close inspection reveals everything about the kite has been carefully thought out, which is why it appears so simple.

Before assembling the kite, I read the accompanying instructions. I have assembled many types of kites before, but some instructions, particularly for quad kites, seem to put up a geometry barrier. If you can get past that, assembly is actually swift and painless.









The kite's distinction is that it is absolutely flat. Its sail depth is zero. It's also symmetrical in all directions, a true omni-kite.

The entire perimeter of the kite is tensioned by leech lines and the sail along the major spars is vented with mesh. The fit and finish of various parts of the kite are clean.

Measuring 76" in span, the Symphony is relatively small but its design results in a larger sail area than any comparable quad. The owner's guide suggests the Symphony is suited to winds between 1 and 16 mph, echoing our experiences with the kite.

We flew the Symphony on sets of 80-lb Spectra lines 35 and 75 feet in length. We actually preferred to fly it on the shorter set, but the longer set allowed more reaction time in strong winds. The Symphony came with a set of nice tubular aluminum handles, which we used all the time.

On our first time out with the kite we encountered moderate winds around 7 mph. To put it plainly, flying the Symphony well takes a steady hand. It is considerably more sensitive than other quad kites we have flown. But after a couple of hours we adapted to the kite and could perform almost any figure in our repertoire.

Stunters				DATA CHART	One-Liners			
Air Ballet	Airotatic	Symphony	Maxima	Name of Kite	Da Vinci	Little Square	4ft Delta	Top Half
								
Tight Lines	Tight Lines	Merrickites	NewTech	Manufacturer	Coast Kites	Trlby	Trlby	Martin Lester
\$220	\$140	\$280	\$130	Retail Price	\$14.95	\$9.95	\$21.95	\$195
RN	RN	RP	RP	Sail Material	Silkspar	RN	RN	RN
DT	DT	n/a	DT	Leading Edge Material	MP	n/a	n/a	n/a
CFt	CFt	CFt	CFt	Framing Materials	MP	FG	FG	n/a
MP	MP	MP	MP	Fittings	n/a	MP	MP	MP
90 x 45	78 x 38	76 x 51	120 x 51	Dimensions (in.)	15.5 x 17	19.75x19.75	19 x 48	37 x 96
9.5	8	n/a	9.5	Sail Depth at stand-offs (in.)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1280	960	2400	2000	Sail Area (sq.in.)	116	390	456	1369
12.25	9.88	8.2	20.00	Weight (oz.)	1.5	0.8	2.2	14.9
1.38	1.48	.492	1.44	Sail Loading (oz./sq.ft.)	1.9	0.3	0.7	1.6
4-20	6-25	1-16	4-20	Suggested Wind Range	8-15	4-15	4-15	4-20
80-200	80-135	80	135-200	Suggested Line (lbs.)	20	20	20	100
N	N	I-A	I	Skill Level Required	I	I	N	N
1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	Assembly Time (minutes)	5	<1	<1	1
VG	VG	VG	G	Ease of Launch/Re-launch	F	VG	G	G
E	E	E	A	Ease of Landing/Ground Work	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M-F	F	F	M	Straight Speed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M-F	F	F	M	Speed in Turns	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
VG	VG	G	G	Precision/Tracking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
M	L	L	H	Amount of Pull	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
SI	SI	SI	SI	Amount of Noise	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
G	G	VG	G	Visual Appeal/Graphics	E	VG	VG	E
VG	VG	E	G	Workmanship	VG	VG	VG	VG
VG	VG	E	G	Portability	G	E	E	E
VG	VG	E	G	Durability	G	E	E	E

**NOTES:** Retail price (US dollars) is "advertised" or "suggested." Wind range (mph) covers minimum and maximum speeds deemed suitable by our evaluators. Dimensions are in the following order: width x height. Measurements and (usually) drawings are made with the kite standing on the floor facing the viewer. Materials: RN-Ripstop Nylon, RP-Ripstop Polyester, DT-Dacron Tape, WD-Wooden Dowels, B-Bamboo, FG-Fiberglass, GR-Graphite, EP-Epoxy, CF-Carbon Fiber, r-Rods, t-Tubes, MP-Molded Plastic, V-Vinyl. Speed: SL-Slow, M-Medium, F-Fast. Skill levels: N-Novice, I-Intermediate, SK-Skilled. Pull: L-Low, M-Medium, H-High. Noise: SI-Silent, L-Low, M-Medium, H-High. Other ratings: P-Poor, A-Acceptable, G-Good, VG-Very Good, E-Excellent, n/a-not applicable.

The payoff for practicing this steady flying is true omni-directional flying. Once you figure out how to instruct it, the Symphony performs diagonal slides and dives easily. Sliding sideways was simple, no matter where we were positioned. Rotating while maintaining its position in the air was also easy to do, though it highlighted the fact that two sides of the sail are not as separated as other quad designs' sides. This is an interesting point, but it had no impact on the kite's performance.

As the wind diminishes, the Symphony lives up to its promised light-wind ability. It feels solid in winds as light as 2 mph, but demands complete concentration to keep it aloft. We weren't able to perform any 3D-style maneuvers, but we suspect in time we can learn new tricks as we become accustomed to the flat sail.

While not the easiest quad we've ever flown, the Symphony has unique strengths. Quad fliers seeking something new to challenge their abilities can find it in the Symphony.

—M.J.G.

## Maxima

There are many affordable kites but there are few of them that offer both quality construction and a 10-foot wingspan. The Maxima by New Tech Sports fills this bill: a big kite without a big price. As with most truly large kites, the Maxima's size is what makes its first impression, but the kite has more than just size to recommend it.

The sail is cut from high-quality ¼-oz. rip-stop polyester in a 16-panel design. All of the seams and hems are double-turned and double-stitched. The sail is reinforced with heavy polyester at all the major stress points.



The Maxima is framed in large-diameter pultruded carbon. Molded plastic fittings are used throughout the frame, adding to its overall stiffness. Three battens support extra sail at each wingtip, significantly increasing the amount of overall sail area presented to the wind.

We flew the Maxima under various conditions, though on the first day out we faced stiff winds of 15 mph. Selecting a set of 200-lb 120-foot lines, we set up on the beach and braced ourselves for action. It became immediately apparent that the kite could handle more wind than we could. The Maxima is a powerful kite.

The Maxima also proved to be a decent performer in lesser winds. It flies comfortably in as little as 4 mph, offering a reasonably wide wind window at all times. It turns sharp corners without any significant over- or understeer and performs tight spins centered just inside its wingtip. Ground play is clearly something the Maxima does not do well, but it is capable of some of the more advanced freestyle maneuvers such as stalls, slides and the occasional axels.

Most large stunt kites are characterized by slow forward airspeed. Not so the Maxima. Its shallow depth of sail results in reduced profile drag, allowing it to fall nicely into team flying among the smaller 8-foot kites. Unlike them, though, the Maxima requires large hand movements by the flier.

While its construction was generally good, the Maxima carried two annoying design features: standoffs that protrude 2" behind the sail and a spine that extends too far below the sail. It was common to catch the flying or bridle lines on one of these protuberances.

New Tech's Maxima offers an impressive amount of kite for the price, without compromising on quality of materials. Fliers who think bigger is better might find their prejudices confirmed with this one. —M.J.G.

## Da Vinci Flying Machine

If you're not a modeler, but you like the look of models, maybe even for hanging over your desk, the Leonardo da Vinci Flying Machine is the answer to a prayer.

Already constructed of Silkspan paper and molded plastic, its assembly is a matter of minutes rather than days or weeks. If

you are a modeler, the da Vinci should provide a good template for your own stick-built version and you could shave a few grams off the weight of the plastic original.

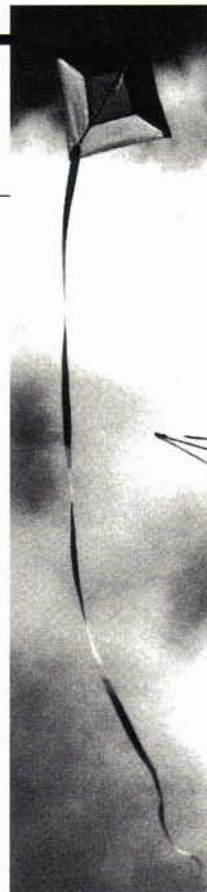
Because of the relatively high weight for this small kite, I had my doubts it would fly. I cut 1/2" strips of white copy paper and taped them to make an 8'8" streamer (by the directions). We flew in winds from 5–20 mph, with occasional higher gusts. Below about 8 mph it was not a good experience. But from 8 mph through a range to over 20 mph, it flew. And it flew stably, through gusts and at a respectable angle of 30–45 degrees. The thin tail might be a disgrace to Leonardo, but we found it to be hardly a distraction at all.

This kite was years in development by longtime kiter Craig Stratton of Coast Kites, and the research shows. There are joints at the wing roots that allow you to play ornithopter with the kite in your hands (but we found no discernible effect from this in the air). There's even a little treadle on the platform where—if a Lilliputian body were strapped in—the feet could flap the wings in flight. What a charmer. —M.G./V.G.

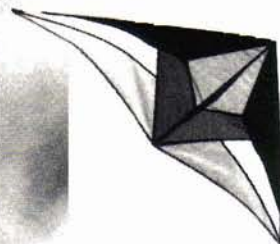
## Trlby's Little Square

When I first saw this kite I was impressed with its craftsmanship and attention to detail. Even though it was made for the child kiter, a kite doesn't have to look as if it were made by children or stamped out by machine. Not built to the exacting detail of a fighter kite, the Little Square nonetheless is built with attention to symmetry that made me think of it at first as a fighter.

With its furnished tail, the Little Square flies as an active but well-behaved kite. A child could hold it and watch it dance, run



Clockwise from left: The Da Vinci Flying Machine shows its stuff; Trlby's Little Square and Delta fly with aplomb; and Martin Lester's Top Half smiles and waves to the crowd.



with it, jerk on the line, whatever, and still look up to see it holding onto the sky. Replace the tail with a longer, lighter surveyor's tape tail, and

it can be flown like a fighter, for example, the Thai pakpao, the Brazilian fighter or the Caribbean Kiskadee. (Refresher course: Tailed fighter kites are maneuvered by first yanking them into a stall and then letting them spin. To recover from the spin, use either a rapid retrieval of line or short yanks on it to take the kite off in the direction it is headed.)

Some of the details of this durable kite:

- flat-fell seams and double-folded hems
- graphics in bright colors that look interesting in the sky
- fiberglass spars with vinyl end caps
- rugged tape pockets for the spars
- brass grommets for the bridle lines to pass through
- flying line on handle included in package
- tail included in package

On the down side, the slippery bridles on both of the two samples we tested came untied. It was no problem for us to tie a security knot at each end before retying, but a child might be disappointed. However, we hear the maker has eliminated this problem in future models by gluing the knot. It's good when a manufacturer listens. —M.G.

## Trlby's 4-Foot Delta

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This is a classically proportioned high-angle flier that will do very well in steady winds of 5 to nearly 20 mph. But its high aspect ratio makes it respond quickly to wind shifts and ground turbulence. So the secret is to get it up quickly and well above the ground. At 100 feet or more, it has room to respond to wind changes as it roams around the sky. In high winds, it will occasionally overfly, but it can easily be calmed by a few feet of plastic or ripstop tail at each wingtip.

All the quality aspects delineated in the review of the Little Square apply here. (There is no bridle line, so the maker didn't have the chance to let the knots slip out.)

Attention to quality presumably applies to the other kites in this new Trlby series, which, besides the Little Square and the Delta, includes a larger Delta and a Diamond, all in an assortment of graphic patterns and colors.

—M.G.

### Martin Lester's Top Half

Martin Lester of England is noted for his Legs kites in all their athletic and dancing variations. Now, here's the "rest of the story."

The Top Half is the better half! It flies better than Legs, probably because the torso of this male figure, like its designer's, is still ahead of middle-aged spread. Where the Legs are a variant of the Flow Form with leading edge buns trailing to legs and feet, the Top Half is a parafoil based torso with shorter appendages of arms and head. The effect is as funny as the Legs.

We're reminded of the People Socks made by Oscar and Sarah Bailey of North Carolina and clever copyists like Bill Gaskill of New Jersey. But People Socks are windsocks, while Martin's Top Half flies on its own. And it moves! The head and fingers put on a real puppet show.

Put up the Top Half and people gather. Put it up next to a Legs and they think they've stumbled onto Lizzie Borden or the chainsaw massacre killer.

For sheer attention-getting, any Martin Lester creation is hard to beat. But the Top Half has an edge because of its simplicity in launch and stability in flight.

—M.G.

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# Swiss Treats & More

By Valerie Govig

## Light & Easy

*Drachen: Spiele mit dem Wind* (Kites: *Playing with the Wind*) by Rainer Neuner (Aarau, Switzerland: AT Verlag, 1994), in German, hardcover, 131 pages, \$32.95.

Here's a nice, accessible kite book, colorful and apparently unobjectionable.

The work seems predicated on the idea that Switzerland needs its own kite book, in particular an introductory volume tailored to the light winds typical there. The book is subtitled "light wind models to make."

The core of the work is its plans, for eight kites and five wind toys—more than usual for a kite book, including wheels, baskets, a Playsail, flags and banners. Laudably, everything comes from Neuner's own experience. Some kites show originality. In particular, the variations on the genki and the yakko are extensive, demonstrating a catholic taste for effects from simple to complex. And I liked the highly posterized "Marilyn" face Edo-type kite. In fact, the only kite I objected to was the hakkaku, an overbuilt version having twice the number of spars necessary for this design.

The book is very well organized. Preceding the plans is a section on tools, materials and line, then another section on techniques, including sewing and appliqué. These are large territories and the coverage, though fairly up-to-date, is not exhaustive.

As a physical product, this is nearly a model book, containing many excellent color photographs, sensitive layout and a good job of printing and binding, with a hardcover that lies flat. Printed off the trim edges are color blocks for each group of chapters, serving as an index.

The book does have some shortcomings. The drawings are only adequate. Missing are background and credit to the creators of the Eddy, genki and others. No general principles of flight are mentioned. The appendix includes safety, wind tables and some useful addresses, but no bibliography, acknowledgments or thank-yous.

In short, *Drachen: Spiele mit dem Wind* is

not a great book, but it's a good one, mostly introductory in nature. For its many wind toys, its variations on the genki and its likable appearance, it should help launch a few kites in the Alps. —V.G.

translation services by Gabriele Hourticolon

## Book News & Forecasts

*The Tao of Kiteflying* by Harm van Veen is getting ready for printing as this issue of *Kite Lines* goes to press. *The Tao* began as an article for *Kite Lines* and then outgrew its space. Although mainly concerned with how kites fly, the book contains plans for two simple kites. This quality softcover will be out in October, selling for \$12.95. ... ♦ At last, Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig's two stunt kite books, originally in German, will be published as one (combination) book, in English! Titled *Making & Flying Stunt Kites & One-Liners*, it's anticipated for publication in November as an 80-page hardcover, all in color, at \$19.95. ...

♦ David Craddock's two books on Lawrence Hargrave won't have to be shipped from Australia anymore. *Kite Lines* is printing them in the USA for the author at a new—and lower—price! ... ♦ The Kite Aerial Photography Worldwide Association (now a foundation) will soon publish, in both English and French, a 140-page book titled *L'Aerophotographie par Cerf-Volant: Hier & Aujourd'hui* (Aerial Photography by Kite: Yesterday & Today). No date yet as we go to press. ... ♦ Seldom do we see books these days in cloth cover and slipcased, but *The Ribbon* is that and more, an exquisite production of a poem written by Hugh Shurley in tribute to a friend lost to AIDS. A kite is used as a metaphor for the struggle of letting go. An evening kitefly was held on May 11, 1995 in San Francisco, California, inspired by the book. Profits from *The Ribbon*, which sells for \$12.95, are donated to San Francisco programs assisting persons living with HIV. (Note: *The Ribbon* will not be carried in the Kite Lines Bookstore. Orders may be sent to the publisher: Chronicle Books, 275 Fifth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; telephone: 800-722-6657.) ♦



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# WHAT IS A KITE?

By Paul Siemsen

**K**ite Lines' question "Is the Arch Ribbon a kite?" (Fall 1992) begs a larger question: "What is a kite?" If one pauses to consider this question, one inevitably asks, "Is a windsock a kite? Is a flag a kite? Is a tethered helium balloon a kite? Why is this a kite? Why is that not a kite?"

And further, "Does a kite have to have lines? Must it have gravity? Does it have to have wind? Does it have to have air at all?"

In this issue's Design Workshop, George Peters describes how to make his Playsail and his Windbow (a version of the Arch Ribbon). Are these kites in the literal sense? Or are they wind toys for the air?

When *Kite Lines* originally asked "Is the Arch Ribbon a kite?" noted expert Harm van Veen of The Netherlands responded:

"Yes, it is a kite (but) it would be nice to have a definition of "kite" to measure the Arch Ribbon against...but it's impossible to determine an ultimate definition because future kite variations cannot be foreseen."

With all respect to Harm van Veen, who has greater historical perspectives on kites than I have, I feel an attempt at a definition must be made. The definition of every word in the dictionary is subject to revision as time passes, and "kite" should be no exception. We can accept that a definition is not absolute and still use that

definition to determine what is—and what is not—a kite.

Let's begin from van Veen's observation that current dictionary definitions are "gradually losing the notions of shape and materials, tending to a description of functions." I suggest the following:

## A DEFINITION OF "KITE"

**A kite is a device which attains position in the relative flow of a fluid medium by being connected nonrigidly to a relative anchor(s), and by constantly presenting an upwind face(s) which deflects the medium's flow. The device must be capable of attaining a position which is off gravity's ground.**

Forgive this definition for getting a little heady. It clearly will not do for a definition of "kite" in Webster's. It is offered as a definition from one kiteflier to another. Perhaps discussing these unusual terms will make them clearer:

**Moves or attains position:** Some kites move, some hover, some do both. It is tenuous to use the word "fly" in the definition instead of this phrase, because the word "fly" comes attached to notions of air and gravity, which are not always necessary for a kite.

**Relative flow:** This simply allows for a "wind" that is moving relative to the kite and its anchor.

In other words, it doesn't matter whether the anchor is standing still and the fluid medium is moving (as when the wind is blowing), or whether the fluid

medium is still and the anchor is moving (as when the anchor is a person running).

**Fluid medium:** Air (wind) is the traditional fluid medium, but these words are not inclusive enough. If one donned scuba gear, descended to the bottom of a deep and wide river, one could launch a kite in the current of the river. It would behave in every way like a kite should, albeit with strains on any lines being used. In other words, a kite must "fly" in a moving medium, but it doesn't matter whether that medium is air, an ocean current, a mercury river or a solar flare.

**Connected:** The connection may be a physical tether (such as a line), or a non-physical tether (such as a magnetic attraction) or a direct connection (nothing between the kite and its anchor).

**Nonrigidly:** The connection to the anchor obviously limits the kite's distance from its anchor, but movement of the kite, left to right and up and down, should not be limited by the connection. In other words, the connection could be nonrigid, in contrast to a rigid connection such as a sign to a signpost.

**Relative anchor(s):** There may be one anchor or several. The anchor(s) may or may not be stationary. For instance, a person is a nonstationary anchor. The anchor offers more resistance to the flow of the medium than the kite does, so it is a "relative" anchor.

**Constantly presenting:** There must always be an upwind face to deflect the wind. However, the face does not have to be constant. A kite may turn and present its face to the wind differently, or it may turn and present a completely different face to the wind.

**Upwind face(s):** An upwind face is any net surface area in direct opposition to the wind's flow. A square of fabric may be held at right angles to the wind and present its full face directly upwind. Or the same square of fabric may be leaned into the wind, presenting a smaller net

What does WEBSTER'S have to say about this?

**kite** /'kit/ n [ME. fr. OE cūtu; akin to MHG kūze owl, def. 12c) in a kitchen  
**kite** /'kit/ n [ME. fr. OE cūtu; akin to MHG kūze owl, def. 12c) in a kitchen  
 : any of various usu. small hawks (family Accipitridae) with long narrow wings and often a notched or forked tail. 2: a person who preys on others. 3: a light frame covered usu. with paper or cloth, often provided with a balancing tail, and designed to be flown in the air at the end of a long string. 4: a check drawn against uncollected funds in a bank account or fraudulently raised before cashing. 5: a light sail used in a light breeze usu. in addition to the regular working sails; esp. used in a light breeze usu. in addition to the regular working sails; esp. used in a light breeze usu. in addition to the regular working sails; esp.  
**INNAKER** — kite-like adj  
 vb kit-ed; kit-ing vt (19)  
 to



surface area as its face into the wind. If the fabric is held parallel to the wind, as with an extended flag, then that fabric is not presenting a face to the wind. An upwind face may be composed of several facets, panels, or sails.

**Deflects the medium's flow:** When the wind hits the kite, the kite's upwind face exerts a sideways force on the wind, which returns an equal force with opposite direction on the kite. A kite must deflect the flow of the air down in order to fly up, or right in order to fly left, or clockwise in order to fly counterclockwise, etc.

**Off gravity's ground:** Most single-line kites use gravity for orientation, that is, to keep one edge or corner down. However, not all kites need gravity. One could maneuver some kites in a wind tunnel in gravityless space. The definition doesn't care if gravity is needed or not needed for a particular kite—but *if gravity is present*, then the kite must be able to lift off the ground. While a kite may be able to scoot along the ground by wind deflection, such scooting is probably not enough to make a device a kite.

Hopefully, these explanations bring our definition's unkite-like terms out of the clouds of obscurity. The element of "fun" has not been discussed—the element that is the "why" of a kite to begin with. But there have been strictly utilitarian uses of the kite, and this disqualifies "fun" from being part of a formal definition. (Of course, our personal definition can include "fun" as being the most essential ingredient of a kite.)

Now we can see that most of the devices we are accustomed to calling kites fit the definition. And we can see how some devices do *not* fit the definition and therefore are not kites.

For example, the following are not kites by this definition:

**Flag**—Does not constantly present an upwind face. Does not attain position by deflection of the medium but attains position by virtue of a flagpole.

**Helium balloon**—Does not attain position by deflection of a medium flow and is not required to be connected to an anchor.

**Monday's wash on the line\***—Does not constantly present an upwind face and does not attain position by deflection of the medium.

**Sailboat**—Incapable of leaving gravity's

ground and does not need to be anchored.

**Streamer**—Does not constantly present an upwind face.

**Windsock**—Does not constantly present an upwind face and does not attain position by deflection of a medium. It achieves orientation and motion by deflection, but it attains position by virtue of its anchor.

Finally, we consider the original question, "Is an Arch Ribbon a kite?" By the definition offered above, an Arch Ribbon is a kite in most circumstances, when it is being used in its heretofore conventional way...

- ① It is connected to anchor persons non-rigidly.
- ② It is achieving position in a fluid medium which itself has motion relative to the ribbon's anchors.
- ③ It is constantly presenting an upwind face to the medium flow.
- ④ It is achieving position by deflection of that medium's flow.
- ⑤ It is able to lift off gravity's ground.

However, there are at least four circumstances when the Arch Ribbon is *not* a kite...

- ① If two anchors are positioned so far apart that they put the ribbon in nearly straight tension, then the ribbon is not achieving its position by virtue of wind deflection. It has its position by virtue of its anchor positions, and it has become a banner rather than a kite.
- ② If two adjacent anchors are brought together into one position, the ribbon may "fold" in half. Then it does not constantly offer an upwind face and becomes a two-ply flag.
- ③ If one end of an Arch Ribbon is let loose from its anchor, the ribbon from that end back to the next anchor is not constantly offering an upwind face. That end has become a flag or a streamer.
- ④ If the ribbon comes loose from *all* its anchors, it becomes...unanchored. It has turned into a large piece of confetti.

I offer this definition to you as I would offer a kite to the sky. I throw it up to see if it flies. If it doesn't fly well, maybe some of you observers in the field would care to suggest modifications to its materials, structure or bridling. If it does fly well, everyone is free to fly it and enjoy it. ◇

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\*"Monday's wash on the line is kin to a kite..." wrote the late Wyatt Brummitt in his *Golden Guide to Kites*.



# George Peters' Playsail & Windbow

By George Peters

So many kitefliers have asked me for the plans of my Playsail and Windbow and, one by one, I have sketched them the details on restaurant napkins, beach sand and chalk boards. I've seen several in the sky already from those brief instructions. Whether they are technically kites or some derivative seems hardly worth arguing. What they definitely give is a howling time of colorful wind play on the kite field.

I didn't design these quite from scratch. However, after observation of them I developed my own plans. Both designs are fairly simple and forgiving. Casual or accomplished kitemakers will be able to make and fly them with very little expertise, but probably they'll need a heavy dose of patience and stamina. In other words, these are two time-munching projects.

## The PLAYSAIL

The Playsail was conceived and designed by artists Richard and Kathi Davey in 1981 in Adelaide, South Australia. They intended their creation to involve large groups of people, but I find it works best for just two.

My current design has gone through little change in the years I've been making and flying it. I make mine with crazy quilt colors using a simple unit pattern that can be rotated for the random design.

### Materials

- 54 yards x 41" of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -oz. ripstop nylon
- 100' of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " grosgrain ribbon
- 1 yard of 4-oz. heavy nylon or Dacron polyester sailcloth
- 2 yards of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " nylon strapping
- 3 yards of 1" nylon strapping
- 4 large-size (1") grommets and 6 smaller ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ") grommets

### Construction

The unit size is 36" by 40". It's easy to create a stock of smaller units and then sew those into rows, then sew the rows into the full sail. It's simple straight line sewing. I use a sail seam (see drawing) for strength and ease of sewing. First, straight-stitch two ruler-cut edges together  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge. Open and



George Peters and his wind toys: left, Playsail, Thailand 1992; above, Windbow, Verdun, Canada 1995.

flatten the two sewn edges over with a zigzag stitch to prevent fray.

The Playsail can be made in any form to suit your own design sense. If you're a minimalist, go for the white sheet look. If you have some time to kill, go for the 1000-piece quilt patterns. It's a good idea to know your own patience levels and not tackle too complex a design project that may end up in pieces in the closet for "some other time." My maxim is to keep it simple and bold.

My method of pattern design is simple. Cut 54 rectangular pieces from 41"-wide fabric 36" long. Split the stack into two piles of 27 sheets each. Line up the edges carefully and tape in place to your cutting surface. With a sharp razor knife, cut a horizontal diagonal line on one stack and a vertical diagonal line on the other. Mix up the colors a bit from each of the separate piles and start sewing the two-color units together. You can design a two-cut or a three-or-more-cut pattern to create unique designs.

After the 54 units are complete, line them up on your cutting surface again for retrimming. Cut them in a smaller stack of 35" by 39" rectangles using a cardboard template. Now take your two diagonal design piles and separate them into four, turning half of each stack over facing the opposite direction. By sewing the stacks together in rows of six starting with stack 1, then stack 4, then stack 2, then stack 3, you will develop the random-looking pattern of the crazy quilt Playsail. When sewing the nine rows of six units together, just make sure the random color arrangement doesn't put two of the same colors or patterns next to each other... You're right, you'd better go out on the lawn outside and lay it out before you sew them together.

Trim the outside edges with a ruler and

sharp knife or scissors and hem the perimeter with a roll-over seam. A  $\frac{1}{2}$ " grosgrain ribbon edging all the way around strengthens the edges. Reinforce the corners with some large triangular 4-oz. nylon or Dacron patches in double layers. Zigzag stitching should be kept fairly wide and long near these stress areas to prevent tearing along the stitch lines.

Then sew  $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide nylon strap loops to the four corners. I put a set of six smaller straps with triangular reinforcements around the edges with grommet holes because the Playsail also makes a fantastic play tent! I've used my tent at kite festivals as a sun shade and rain cover, for outdoor workshops, backyard parties and even weddings. I use 2" x 2" wood poles with a peg at the top inserted into the grommet holes (use large grommets) and lines stretched from the strap loops to the ground stakes.

I've also used it as a giant flag, as a ground cloth and as a sled for all my kite gear when everything needs to be taken quickly under cover. I've even wrapped up in it for warmth on a damp night camping in Fanø, Denmark.

### Performance

Best of all is the Playsail in the wind! You'll need two strong fliers and some gloves to handle the ropes. The rectangular sail is best flown wide to the wind, that is, with the two Playsailors at each of the shorter sides.

Take two lengths of 100-foot rope (I use  $\frac{3}{8}$ " poly rope). Mark the middle at 50' with a knot on the line and tie or clip the two loops into the straps on the corners. Stretch it out perpendicular to the breeze, holding the midpoint of the loops at each end until the sail catches some wind. Then slowly let the sail fill as both sailors move slightly together to "cup" the wind. Pulling the top lines in slightly will raise the sail and pulling the bottom lines will drop it toward the ground.

Having more than two people controlling the two ropes will only confuse the



matter and your sail will collapse in a heap. This is really a two person kite.

One time, in the 40+mph winds of Washington in Northern England, I decided to solo fly it. All I remember was the barbed wire fence at the far end of the field approaching much too fast to do the sensible thing—Let Go! Indeed that is the key phrase to remember if you get in trouble. Since you're dealing with fairly large material, you will soon learn some humility in windy matters.

Once your flying is adept, you can try the 180-degree flip. Each Playsailor runs to opposite sides as the Playsail does a big slow flip. The trick is not letting it touch the ground. You'll soon hone your quad-line skills to include the inside-out maneuver, the twist, the vertical climb and the famous "kid net." (The Playsail is a magnet for children bent on trying to keep it from going up by jumping on it.)

But flier beware! There's a lot of power in the wind when you get to the 500 square-foot-plus Playsail. In lighter winds, though, it's a floating wonder, responding to the slightest manipulation of the control lines.

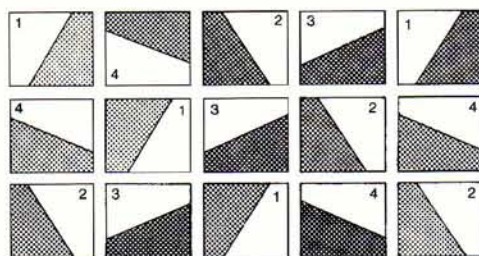
## The WINDBOW

The Windbow is another power wind toy that can literally carry you away. Technically called an arch ribbon, it was designed by Étienne Veyres and Alain Chevalier of France. I was so taken by these simple flying ribbons that I had to make one for myself.

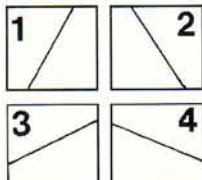
The Windbow is my version of the arch ribbon with a few added aerodynamic details to create a super wind toy. The open pocket detail on the battens allows for a slight bubble effect along the leading edge of the arch, increasing airfoil lift. It will fly at times directly overhead. The longer curve on the trailing edge will balance the ribbon by adding a bit of flap, keeping the arch from overflying.

### Materials

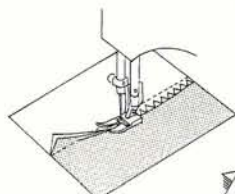
- 34 yards x 41" of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -oz. ripstop nylon
- 400' of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 4-oz. Dacron polyester or nylon ribbon
- 1 yard of 4-oz. reinforcement Dacron
- 4' of 1" heavy nylon strapping
- 60" of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " fiberglass batten or .505 tubing
- 33 pieces .180 carbon rods →



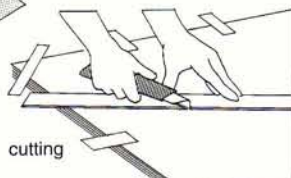
assembly of fabric pieces



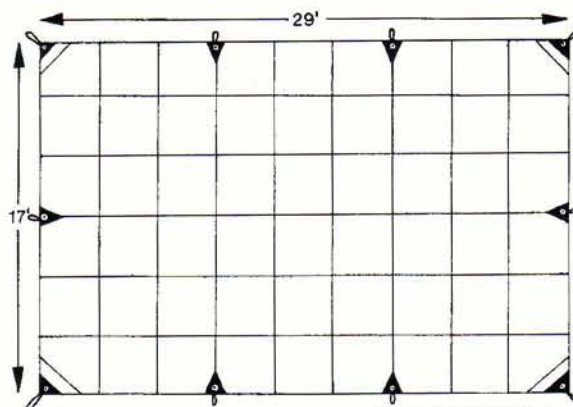
2 stacks of fabric with diagonal cuts, half the stacks flopped for crazy-quilt effect



stitching



cutting



Playsail general plan

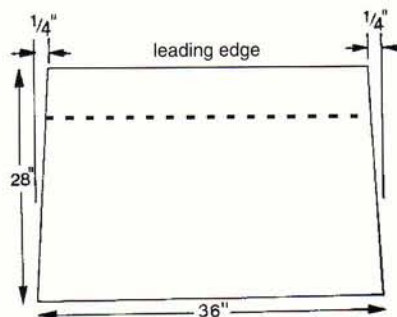
handle of Playsail

## PLAYSAIL

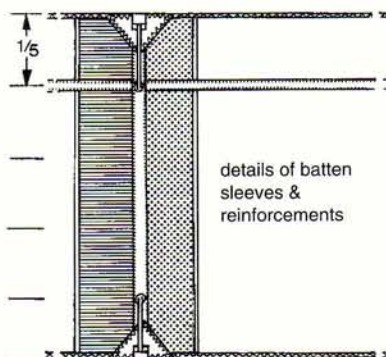
drawings, not to scale, by George Peters

## WINDBOW

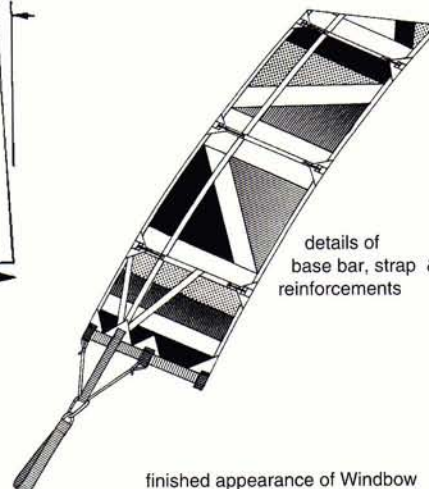
drawings, not to scale, by George Peters



pattern for unit in Windbow



details of batten sleeves & reinforcements



details of base bar, strap & reinforcements

finished appearance of Windbow

GEORGE PETERS is an artist who has devoted his talents primarily to kites since 1975. His flying-man kites, insects, sandimal anchors, feather banners—and playfulness—make him a one-man kite festival wherever he goes. He was last year's winner of the Jalbert Kite Innovation Award.



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## DESIGN WORKSHOP...Continued

### Construction

I use the unit method as in the Playsail. Units are 36" wide by 28" high. An ideal length is between 100' and 125' (33 to 42 units). You can make them longer, but beware in strong winds.

Here's the secret ingredient: trim the edges of the units into a truncated wedge, ¼" in on each side of the leading edge (*see drawing for unit pattern*). This will bring the ribbon in about ½" at every batten pocket on the leading edge and create the shallow curve that's needed. The units are then sewn edge to edge. Be sure you mark the units as to which is top edge and which is bottom edge so you don't get them mixed up.

The top and bottom edges of the ribbon are reinforced with ¾" 4-oz. Dacron or nylon ribbon, folded and zigzagged in place. The center line and tow points of the Windbow are reinforced as well with the ¾" ribbon. This line is positioned at one-fifth from the leading edge (or 5½" on a 28" Windbow).

The edges tend to take a lot of ground abuse so I reinforce each pocket with a triangular 4-oz. nylon patch and leather pockets. For superior lightness and strength, I use .18 carbon rods for battens. Dowels work but they tend to break a lot when the ribbon gets some launching twists in it.

Sew the 1' x 1" strap loops and reinforce the tow points as shown in drawing. I put an extra set of lines through the straps to distribute the stress better along the base bars. These bars need to be extra strong and stiff for the loads they will take. I use ¾" fiberglass flat battens. Attach a couple of wrist straps with a small carabiner and you're ready to fly!

### Performance

I often fly my Windbow on long lines, using the 100' Playsail ropes clipped to the straps at both ends. This puts the ribbon high up where the wind is strong and steady. I've tied it off to some strong anchors at several festivals with steady winds and it stayed up there all day, framing the surrounding scene.

The Windbow flies best when positioned perpendicular to the wind direction with the sparred side facing the wind. Wear gloves, especially when flying on long rope lines. When it is dragging you across the field or out to sea, remember, "Let Go!" ◇

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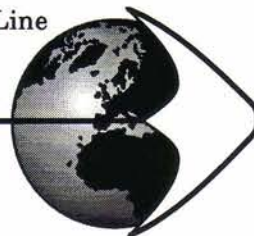


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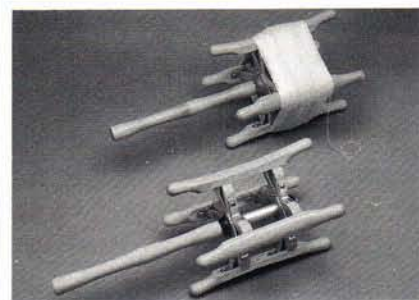
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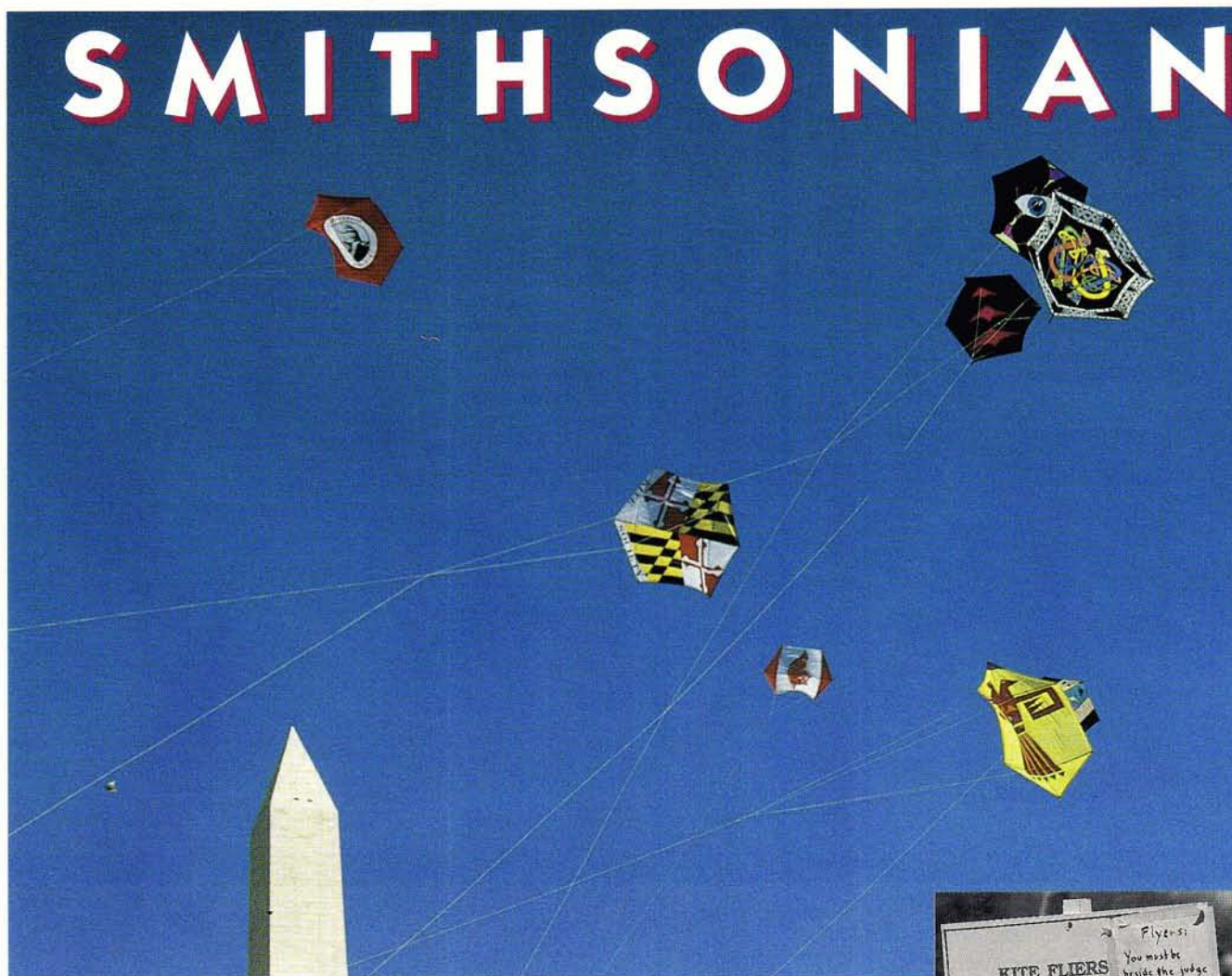
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somethin' about the



Article & Photographs by Valerie Govig

**What is it about the Smithsonian Kite Festival that keeps people coming back, grumbling sometimes, but coming back?**

**It can't be the parking, which is a lesson in vehicular torture.**

**It can't be the judging and organization, which invariably slips in one little department or another.**

**Nor can it be the quality and quantity of the kites, which don't compare to those of the major international festivals.**

**Still it has something—or rather several somethings:**

## A MAGIC NAME

The biggest draw of this event is the very name "Smithsonian," which carries an aura of erudition and prestige. Somehow it means more to say "I won at the Smithsonian" than to say "I won at the Las Vegas Kite Carnival."

Closely allied to the name is the place. Where could you find a more appropriate location than this broad lawn on the Mall in our nation's capital, among all the historic buildings and adjacent to the immense

obelisk of the Washington Monument? This is a national event—simply because it is where it is.

## A TRADITION

The festival began from a conversation one summer afternoon in 1966 between S. Dillon Ripley, the Secretary of the Smithsonian, and the late Paul Edward Garber, Historian Emeritus of the National Air & Space Museum. As they walked along the Mall, Ripley remarked on the beauty of the

place and its regrettable disuse. He asked Garber for ideas on how to bring people outdoors to this matchless area. Garber suggested a kite contest—a carnival of kites.

"Good," said Ripley. "You're in charge!" That was the start of what became an annual labor of love for Garber and his wife Irene ("Buttons"). Garber planned the judging system and field layout that endures in more-or-less the same form today. He trained volunteers from the Air & Space Museum and the Smithsonian Associates to staff the



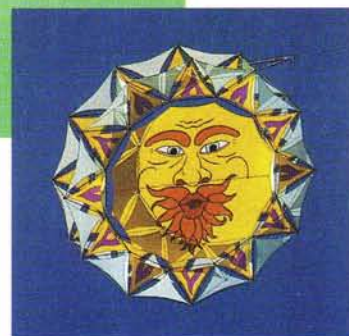
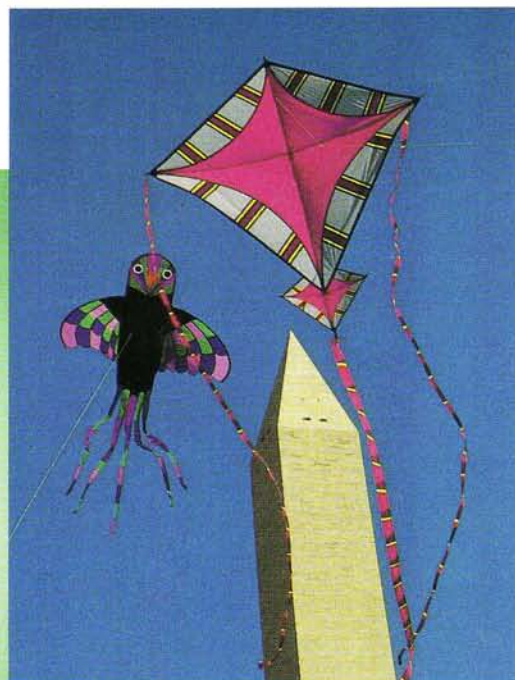
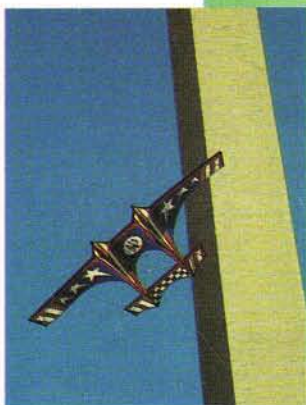
**Top: Action, cuts, drifting kites!**—it was one of the best rokkaku battles in Smithsonian history, drawing 29 entries (including the perennial Mamasans) and won by the Lehigh Valley Kite Society. **Above: the Smithsonian's judging is always rigorous, formal—and under development.**





A small sampling of Smithsonian kites, clockwise from upper left: Chartres Cathedral kite by Bill Connors of Horseheads, New York; a Chinese double square made from a Japanese plan in American patchwork style by Kai Griebenow, a native of Germany; two kites against the Monument: a

kinetic bird kite based on the Hewitt Flexkite by Douglas Kegerise of Feasterville, Pennsylvania (winner of Beauty-in-the-Air) and its close competitor, a diamond by Richard Koons of Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Sun Face kite, an emulation of the kites of France's André Cassagnes, made by Pete Dolphin of Merchantville, New Jersey, winner of both the highest overall score and the People's Choice award; the Japanese o'dako at launch; and an airplane kite by Mike Sterling of Portland, Oregon.



event, along with his friends in the aero and kite communities. The Garbers also collected and made kites for display and prepared the lecture and workshop that preceded the competition. This tradition has been maintained, although the display, lecture and workshop are now compressed into one intensive Saturday under the direction of Bevan Brown.

## AN EVOLUTION

This event is not cast in stone like the monuments on the Mall. The Garbers themselves tinkered with the system. For example, in the first few years there were separate classes for males and females. The women's movement had its effect on that patronizing touch.

In the last four years the biggest change has come from the creation of the Smithsonian Kite Festival Advisory Committee, which helps the Smithsonian Associates run the Festival. The previous reliance on individuals (first the Garbers, then Bevan and Margo Brown) became a burdensome personal responsibility. Now local kite clubs (principally the Maryland Kite Society, the Capitol Air Korps and the Lehigh Valley Kite Society) are involved. The total number of vol-



unteers at the Festival is approximately 100.

Likewise, sponsorship has broadened. Although the main sponsor is still the Smithsonian Associates, their ever-more-restricted budget has required them to seek more help from outside donors. But with these changes the sense of vitality and outreach for new ideas seems to have improved.

It used to be that the judges would follow a set of scoring rules that would vary little from year to year. (Keters learned to make their kites with lots of sticks for a higher score.) Now the rules are reviewed every year and even the categories are updated.

A big change based on increased participation was the creation of two classes, for "masters" and for novices. More changes can be expected, because right after the festival the committee starts its annual round of meetings and self-criticism that bring improvements for next year's festival.

## LOSSES & GAINS

For the sentimental among us, there will never be anyone to replace Paul Garber's running commentary on the kites or his singing of "God Bless America" at the microphone. But we are lucky to have the good voices of Rick Kinnaird, Jon Burkhardt, Margo Brown and others to fill the gap.

Something else we've lost: for many of the first years, Irene Garber managed an archives that included photographs of all the contestants, kite in hand, as they were presented with their awards. The trophies were given with a slow formality that allowed for these indulgences.

However, the gains have been big. The number of kites entered depends on weather, but discounting the wet, cold and windless days, the number of entries has generally increased. The total in 1995 was 151. More important, the number of winners as a proportion of total entries has increased. The publicity and the crowds have grown bigger, too: in 1995, an estimated crowd of 10,000 came to clap and cheer. The audience includes many kites picnicking and kite-



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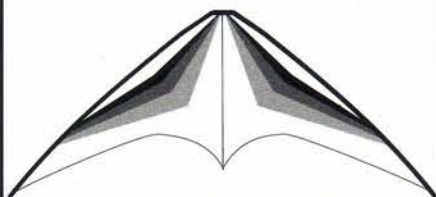
*"Air Ballet"*



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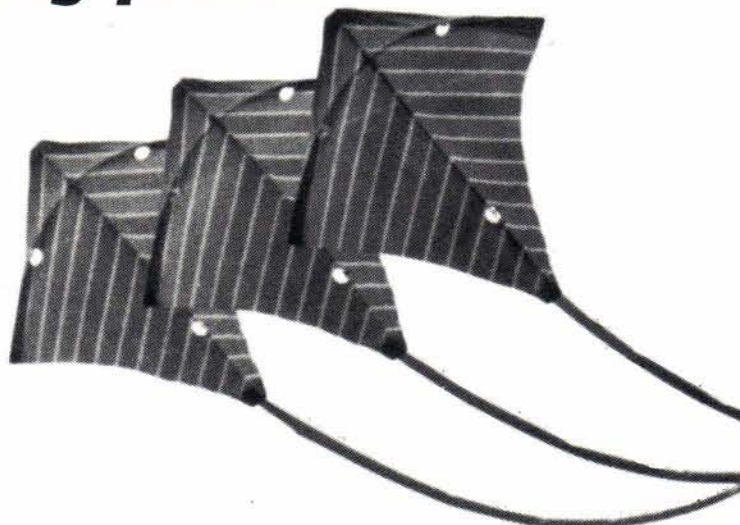
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flying under flapping banners all around the main field. The extra-curricular spectacle (this year, buggies!) can surpass that of the competition itself.

Demonstrations have been added—stunt kite flying, teddy bear parachuting, rokkaku kite battling. A major attraction in 1995 was the appearance of a team of kitefliers from Shirone, Japan. In their matching hapi coats, the young men and their famous leader, Kazuo Tamura\* assembled and flew a traditional *o'dako* (big kite). It was a thrill to see one of these famous war kites rise and glow in the sun next to the Monument. The kite was one of several brought to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts the week before, where the kites had been a backdrop for a performance of Japanese martial arts. This lucky coordination by Bill Foster for the Kennedy Center and Rick Kinnaird for the local kite clubs resulted in further cultural exchanges. The Shirone team gave school workshops and the kites were marched the next weekend in the Cherry Blossom Parade.

\*See article on Tamura in *Kite Lines*, Fall 1994.



Six kites from Shirone are marched down Constitution Avenue by local kites in Washington's Cherry Blossom Parade. The team carries a rectangular kite face up to minimize wind resistance. Periodically en route, the team does a turnabout with the kites to display them to the clapping crowds.

### SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

The Garbers would be glad to see that a high proportion of families and children still come to the Smithsonian Kite Festival. Kids and parents fly their spur-of-the-moment creations made from butcher paper and dowels. The special family awards encourage that—the larger the family, the higher the score. The Holmes family of Georgia, South Carolina and Maryland has a reunion every year at the Smithsonian to capitalize on it.

You expect to be surprised at the Smithsonian: people will bring kites like you've never seen before, everything from the strange to the magnificent. There is always someone to carry on the questionable but established Smithsonian tradition of flying for the first time at the Festival a kite that was made at 2:00 a.m. the night before. Somehow after a night of kitemaking and a day of kiteflying the kites still have the energy for an evening of kite partying generously hosted by the Browns after the festival.

Many of us have been to nearly all the Smithsonians from the beginning. We look forward every year to the last Saturday in March (if Easter or the Cherry Blossom Festival don't upset the schedule as they do—rarely). We especially look forward to 1996, when the 30th annual Smithsonian will happen once again. The celebration will coincide fortuitously with the 150th anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution itself. Much as the Festival depends on the continuity of its regular volunteers, it will surely outlast them all. We wouldn't have it any other way.



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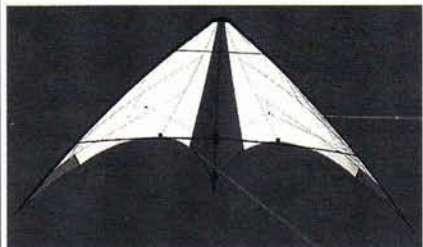
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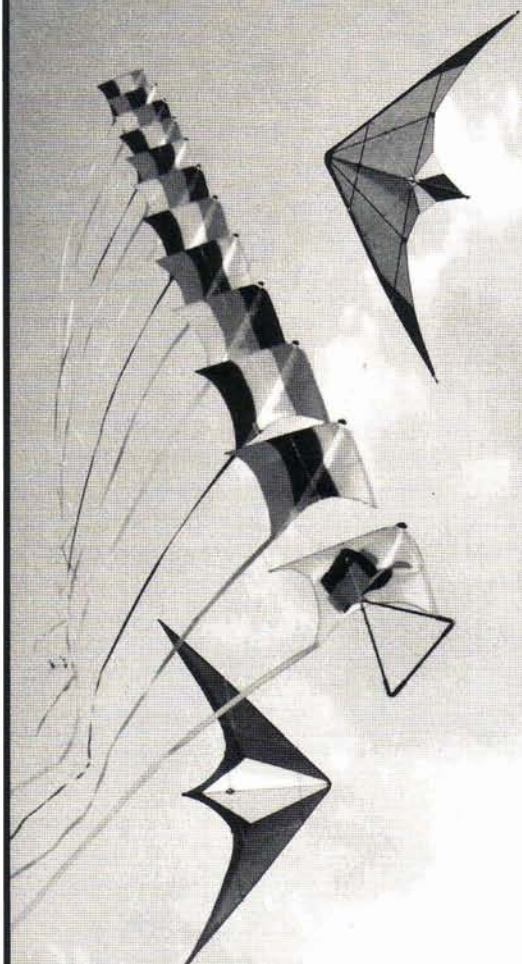
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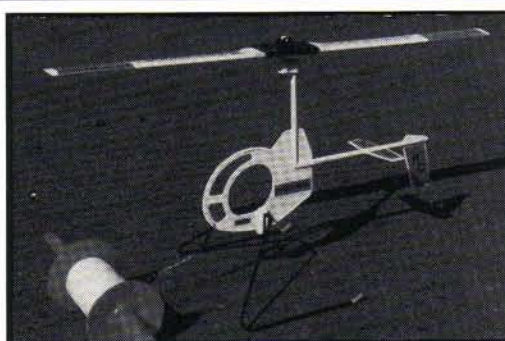
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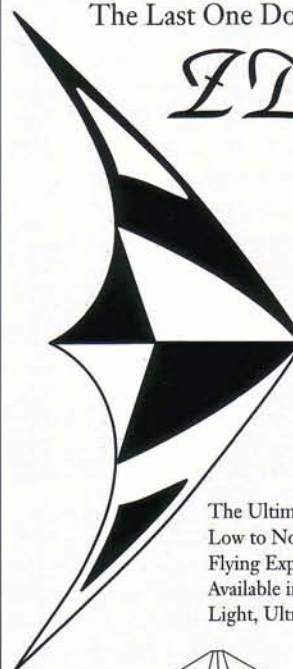


SCOTT HAMPTON / AERIAL ART © 1994

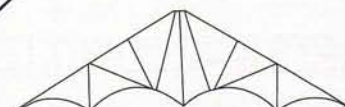
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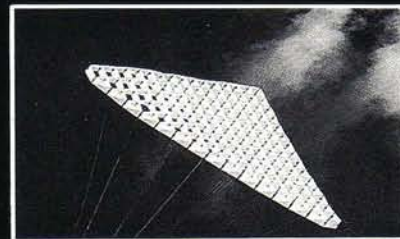
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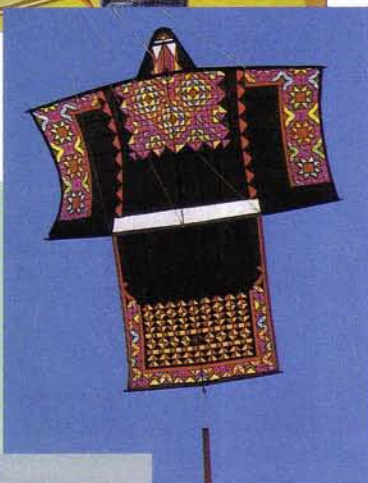
# NEW ZEALAND

Geraldine Lopdell, Peter White and feline friend take to the field in Napier.



# CURAÇAO

A whole family gets behind the making and flying of big kites for the Caribbean winds.



# ISRAEL

The Shavit family, Israeli kitefliers from Jerusalem, sends its *sode* (kimono kite) high.



# ITALY

Medio Calderoni, dean of Italian kiteflying, flies one of his kites, assembled from recycled materials.



# CANADA

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police as kites by the ebullient Elain Genser of British Columbia.

## KITE FESTIVALS!

We could write a book.

But we only have a magazine. It may look bad for us to apologize, but we can't help ourselves; we know how festival organizers feel. We never do enough. Any festival story we've ever published—or ever will publish—will dissatisfy *someone* (often ourselves).

So here is our standard apology: To all the people and kites we saw and didn't mention, and also those we didn't see and didn't mention, we are sorry for our space and human limitations. We trust in your understanding.



# NEW ZEALAND

a great event  
touched with sadness

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY SIMON FREIDIN

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Above, schoolchildren and teacher with perfected Maori kites.  
Inset, on the rise: a stack of three Double Square kites by Michel Gressier of France

Once again New Zealand provided the setting for a world class kite festi-

val. Despite overcast skies most of the time, the full gamut of events was there: demonstrations by each of the 16 countries, multiple rokkaku kite battles, the world's largest kite, dual- and quad-line stunt kite demonstrations, bugging and a multitude of new and old creations constantly in flight.

During the opening ceremony the crowd watched the spectacle of a Maori blessing of the festival, official speeches and a Maori singing group.

If there was one memory of this event to be held dear it was the success of the traditional Maori kites

in flight! In the first New Zealand festival in 1990, the reconstructed Maori kites flew poorly, or hardly at all. But in 1995 the



Australian Michael Alvares sets up his new box kite.

## NAME:

World Kite Festival: Napier,  
New Zealand

WHICH ANNUAL: 2nd (occasional)

DATES: March 9-12, 1995

LOCATION: Napier, New Zealand

SITE: Anderson Park

ORGANIZERS: James White and the New  
Zealand Kitefliers Association





**RED APPLE AWARDS\***  
presented by Shakib Gunn  
at the World Kite Festival,  
New Zealand, 1995

- James and Judy White and Heather Holland for brilliant organization
- David Brittain, Alan Nagao (USA) and Ray Bethell (Canada) for outstanding effort in teaching stunt kiteflying on Children's Day
- Lena Gurezka for being in the wrong place at the wrong time and Tony Sangster for being in the right place at the right time
- Michael Alvares for working with children, in the pre-festival workshops and lolly drops
- Tom Casselman (USA) for most untiring performance
- Peter Whitehead for rokkaku fighting (New Zealand flier) and Masaaki Modegi (Japan) for rokkaku fighting (international guest)

\* The Red Apple Awards are made personally by Shakib to kites who contribute to the particular character of an event. Of course, there were other awards in Napier as well, notably, the Inaugural New Zealand Buggy Championship trophy, which went to Peter Lynn and Shayne Roberts of New Zealand, first place and second place respectively.

kake mai"—Climb, climb, ascend, ascend.

There is still no other commentator who can match Shakib Gunn of Singapore for tireless skill at the microphone. Over the

kites flew proudly, thanks to the efforts of the teachers and pupils of the Omahu school. Once again constructed of reed, woody vines and flax, these creations flew well in the strong winds on Children's Day. They fulfilled the Maori chant, "Piki mai, piki mai, kake mai,

years, Shakib has developed his commentary into a fine art—aware, entertaining, unique.

The world's largest kite, brought by the Dutch team, was trundled onto the field in the scoop of a tractor which served as its anchor. It was fascinating to see the Dutch team commandeer the crowd to unfurl, launch and repack their giant kite. In particular, the task of deflating and rolling the huge amount of semi-inflated material was done by people throwing their bodies into it, on command, in unison. People really got into the fun!

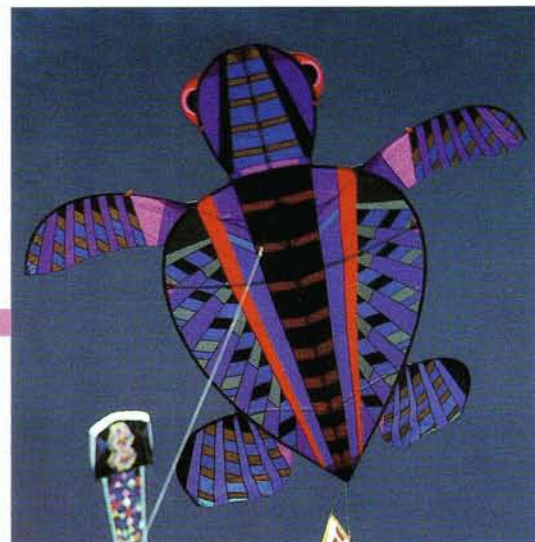
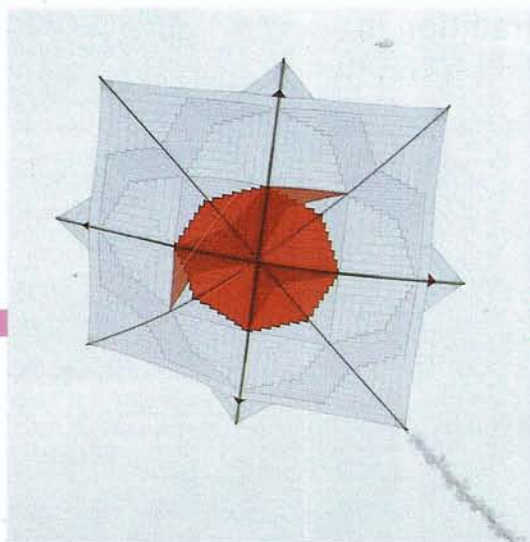
After I arrived at the festival, I and the 100 other overseas guests learned of James White's battle with cancer. James was the driving force behind the event. Although he wanted to slow down the pace of his involvement, James was at the field every day and many kites turned to him when details needed attention. James was lucky

that his wife Judy and secretary Heather could just as competently make a guest feel comfortable and welcome at the festival.

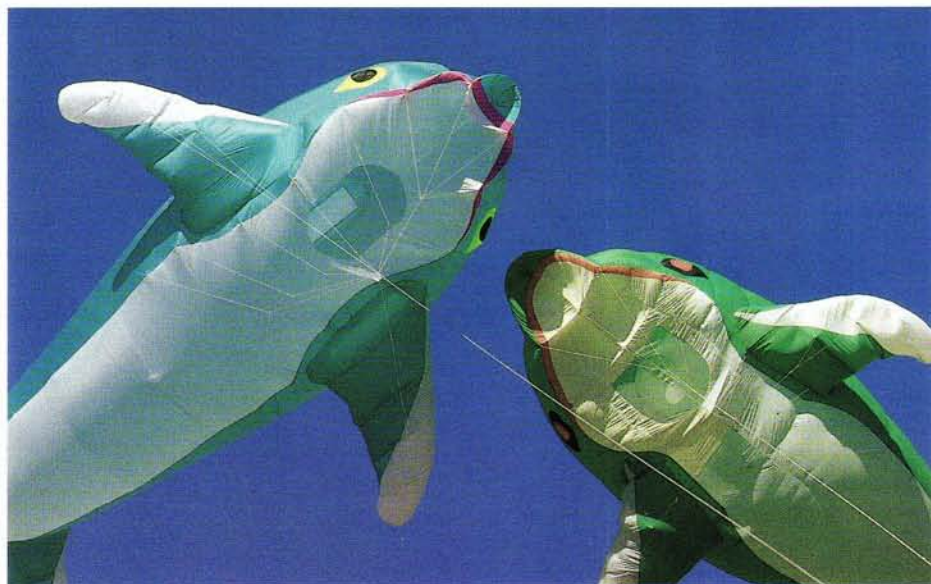
In fact, the support of many sponsors, the opening party at the Whites', the mayoral reception and the help of the New Zealand Kitefliers Association all contributed to the utmost in hospitality for the guests. It is difficult to do justice to all that dedication.

Since the first New Zealand festival, James and I have had a private joke. At the end of the first festival, James told me he awaited reading my story to determine whether he had enjoyed the festival or not. When we met at Dieppe last year, James told me how glad he had been to discover he had indeed enjoyed New Zealand. So at the end of this year's event James said he was looking forward to finding out if he had enjoyed this one too.

Do I need to state the obvious, James?



Two Colorado kites on show: left, a red-on-red bird and sun against white-on-white background by Scott Skinner; right, swimming tortoise by George Peters.



Kissing dolphins by Peter Lynn, New Zealand's buggy and kite inventor extraordinaire.

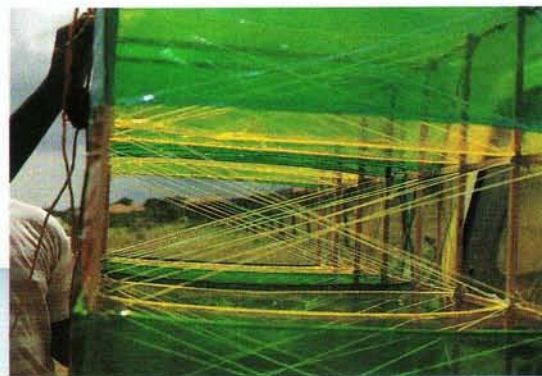




# CURAÇAO

## family tradition in winds that won't quit

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY MEL GOVIG



Two kites in Curaçao are proudly displayed by team members who made and flew them. At left is the contest's overall winning kite, with interior view (inset) showing its complex structure. The team captain, Ronny Koffie, wins the prize of a trip to Thailand. Below, a kite comprising 37 traditional bowed Caribbean kites has massive effect.

**F**or some, Curaçao is a sweet liqueur made from oranges. For others it's a stop on the

Caribbean cruise itinerary, the C in the ABCs of the islands, after Aruba and Bonaire. For about 100,000 people, it is home. The Curaçaoans have made an industry from their inbred friendliness and the island's arid beauty.

Not surprisingly, most islanders speak several languages. Besides the local patois, called Papiamentu, my taxi driver spoke Dutch, Spanish, English, Portuguese, German and French (plus a few words of Japanese).

But for kiteflying, Curaçao has a greater asset: trade winds throughout the year, averaging 16 mph! The winds are so consistent that all the trees have a permanent north-easterly warp.

In Curaçao, the traditional focus on family, parish and neighborhood (barrio) is evident in all things. Nowhere is it more evident than in kiteflying. There are family and barrio teams from two to 30 or more.

Girls, boys, mothers and fathers pull together to build and fly creative and often huge kites. Groups have trademark kites: boxes, three-dimensional creatures, long kites, flat kites—each has the stamp of the particular family or barrio.

Made for Curaçao's winds, the kites are heavily framed and firmly lashed. The mate-



### NAME:

Curaçao International Kite Festival

WHICH ANNUAL: 1st

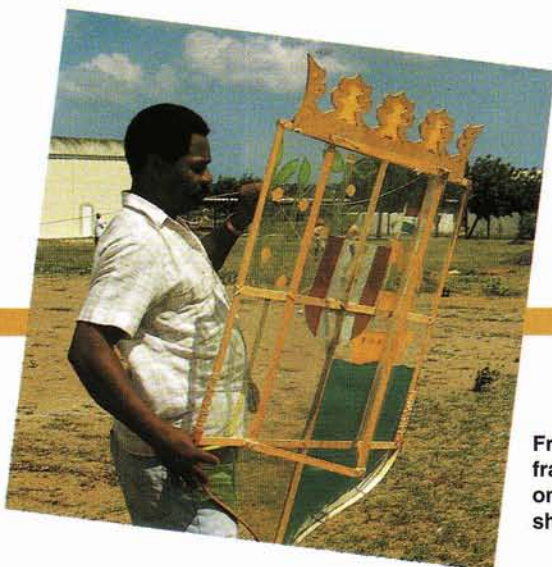
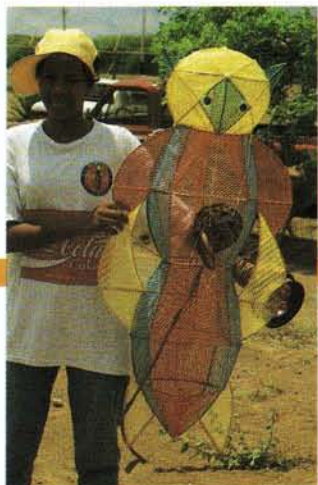
DATES: April 21–23, 1995

LOCATION: Willemstad, Curaçao, N.A.

SITE: grounds of the University of the Netherlands Antilles

ORGANIZERS: Carol Jansen and the Curaçao Kite Association





From left, a figure kite shows original shape; a kite frame made by cutting holes from plywood, leaving only the "sticks" and requiring no joints; two kites show intense gels in the brilliant Curaçao skies.

rials are basic: lumber cut into stout sticks; strong twine outlining and guying the frame; tissue paper or cellophane covers. Contact cement holds the film on the frame. The tails are from bed sheets, burlap bags and tarpaulins. The kites are strong enough to be transported to the field in open trucks.

The designs are based on those typical of the West Indies: three sticks (with bowing at the head) and long tails. Starting from this, the kite designs of Curaçao have flourished like island plants after a rain. For these kites, whatever the impulse, if it can be framed, lashed and covered with cellophane, it can be flown. Even kite designs that are copied from books or commercial kites are built from lumber, twine and cellophane.

The use of cellophane is new; I was told that 20 years ago the kites were made with the glassine paper favored in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and parts of Europe. Once the Curaçaoans discovered the cheaper cellophane, paper faded into history.

As a fighter kite enthusiast, I hoped to find a fighter kite tradition in this country. But one of the oldest kitemakers on the island said, "We do not fight with kites in Curaçao, we play." However, when I handed him the line of a Suriname fighter kite I had brought, I stood in awe as he did several figure-of-eight maneuvers toward the ground and made a 120-degree pass from left to right before handing back the line. The day before, some boys also flew my Suriname kite. The object seemed to be to

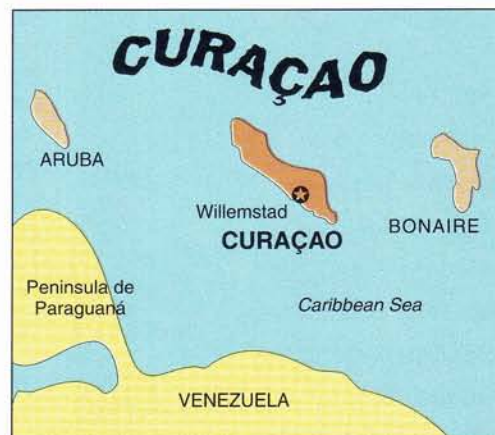
outperform the last person flying. The closer you get to the ground, the more dramatic the final pass, the louder the applause and the greater the challenge to the next flier. It is more like a limbo dance or a jazz trumpet "blow-down" than a battle. "Beat that!" is the goal. No harm, no foul—a very civilized kite fight.

But at this festival, the contest rules precluded kite maneuvering. Prizes were given for rapid ascent, steady flight and sustained angle of elevation. The thorough, serious judges had been seasoned by Curaçao's Easter Sunday kite ascensions that draw 400 fliers a year. Our international event the weekend after Easter apparently was anticlimactic and attracted fewer people.

Exuberant organizers Carol Jansen and the Curaçao Kite Association (*Fundashon di Fli Korsou: F.F.K*) have decided that next year and in all future years the international festival will be held on Easter weekend to coincide with the local event.

The Curaçao International may grow in size (this year only Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, The Netherlands and the U.S.A. were represented) but its hospitality is already ample.

Below, the largest kite at the festival uses a crew of about 30 to carry, launch and fly it, not to mention a team to carry the tail (inset).

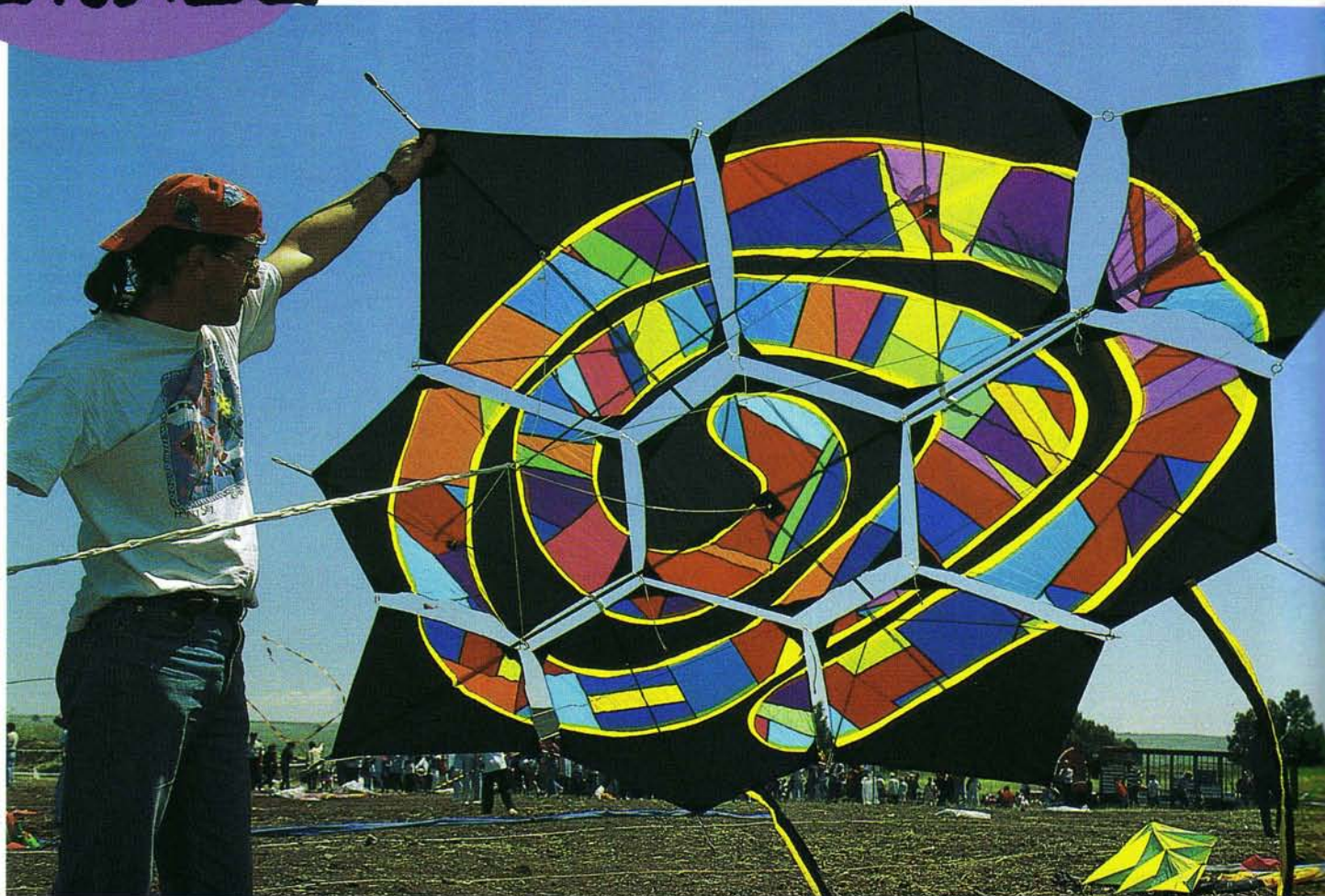




# ISRAEL

## the field of bad dreams & the post-op recovery

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIERRE FABRE



Gill Marcus holds up one of his many new designs on the Katzarin field.

### VIEW I by Pierre Fabre

**P**articipants in the Israeli kite festival returned with many unanswered questions, such as:

Why set this festival in the Golan Heights, an occupied territory since 1967, won by Israel from Syria during the Six Day War?

Why hold a festival for kites, messengers of peace, in a highly-militarized area, where every soldier carries an automatic rifle at all times?

Why choose a military training ground, sprinkled with unused cartridges, sharp parts of training shells and rusty barbed wires left half-buried in the harsh soil of a dried dusty earth?

Why should the beautiful landscape be hidden by ugly plastic tents, advertising billboards and portable toilets?

Why did the public have to pay an entrance fee so high (up to \$7 US per person)? When the wind didn't help the show, many rightly complained and wanted their money back.

It seemed business and politics once

again had spoiled the soul of kiting and ruined a festival.

Many of us felt like hostages on this field. We couldn't even run away because of dangerous shells scattered around the countryside. We felt cheated by an obscure organization, not knowing if we were there to comfort the positions of right-wing politicians, to fill the pockets of a private company or to please an Israeli public who expected a real show.

Some aspects of the festival, such as location and financing, were not revealed to us before we reached our destination. This lack of information caused serious misunderstanding between the organizers of the festival, its art director, Yael Padova Levi, and the guest kite artists. The result: no one had the kite festival they wanted or expected.

This promising event had been announced as a festival that would empha-

#### NAME:

International

Israeli Kite Festival

WHICH ANNUAL: 3rd

DATES: April 16-22, 1995

LOCATION: Golan Heights, Israel

SITE: Field near Katzarin

ORGANIZER: Yael Padova Levi



Right, one in a brand new series by Ton Geers, who radically changed his style. He's framed by the ever-prominent advertising billboards. Far right, Solano Cardenas and one of his distinctive kite sculptures, "La Chrysalide."



size the artistic aspects of kites. There would be exchanges between international guests and Israeli

artists and discussions around the concept of kite art. Many outstanding kite creators came, including István Bodóczy of Hungary, George Peters of the U.S.A., Robert Trépanier of Canada, Gill Marcus and Ton Geers of The Netherlands, Solano Cardenas and (flying the kites of Michel Gressier) Jean-Michel Petit of France, and Raoul Fosset of Belgium, a kite aerial photographer and longtime lover of Israel.

Although we did meet some Israeli kite-fliers, none of the artists we expected to meet ever showed up. So the guest kites took the opportunity to get better acquainted with each other's work. We held several informal meetings until early morning in our rooms, involving various local and imported beverages. We extensively used cellular phones, very common and cheap in Israel. The gathering of this small group of kite artists was stimulating and could inspire attempts at organizing exhibits or kite art festivals elsewhere.

Although everyone agreed the festival itself failed because of its improper setting, we experienced intense moments and fun with many surprises, good and bad, that will keep Israel in our memories for a long time.

During the couple of free days we spent on the beaches of Tel Aviv and Herzliya the kitefliers took their revenge: Peters, Trépanier and Petit flew for themselves and set up a spontaneous "off festival" and put kites in the air for themselves. I was already back in Paris; I'm sad I missed that one.

The festival did give the kitemakers the opportunity to get better acquainted with

each other's work and we learned much about Israel's political dilemma. So, in the end, this festival offered us quite an enriching experience.

## VIEW II by George Peters

If I were to try to find a term for kite travel, it would be called something like "Wishful Wind Wandering." Like itinerant sky surfers, we search for the perfect winds around the world to throw a splash of color in the air.

Finding good wind is the trick. You can occasionally find the perfect wind at kite festivals, but in my experience it is rare. Despite the best intentions, festival organizers often end up with either too much wind, not a breath of wind, a washout deluge or a swirling, bumpy, first-this-way-then-that-way twister. If you intend to actually entertain large crowds of people, you can almost count on the wind pooping out on you.

My travel experience has made me wind-wise. Often, the best wind is not at a kite festival but is hiding somewhere else.

I traveled to the event in Israel expecting to be in the rolling green and flowered fields just above the Sea of Galilee. A perfect picture in the mind but in reality, as usual, it was something quite different.

Let me say now that when the wind doesn't seem to want to cooperate neither does anything else.

Bumping up the dirt road into the hills beyond the promising festival banners, we

came upon a large open, freshly bulldozed dirt-clod field surrounded by a web of churned-up roadways. My first thought, looking at the flying field was, "I wonder what this will be like when it rains?" The sky overhead and my inner cloud darkened a bit. We were told not to wander beyond the fences because of the unexploded artillery shells and land mines. This was occupied Syrian territory and Israeli soldiers





were assigned to keep us safe with Uzis slung over shoulders, pistols in their belts and cellular phones to their ears. Somehow I did not feel all that safe.

We kitefliers caught our kite bags as they were tossed from the truck. A few plops of rain tapped the dirt as we looked for cover. The tents were no refuge. The organizers had expected sunny days and had covered the tent tops with sunscreen netting. No dry place there. A few test kites went up. The drops got bigger. We all dashed for whatever cover we could find.

The following day, carloads of families streamed up from Tel Aviv and paid admission at the gate.

With each tentative breath of wind, we tugged our lines, ran, propped kites and watched the launched kites drop like leaves onto the dirt. All day long this continued. Loudspeakers crackled with anticipation and apologies about the lack of wind. Lively party music filled the windless field but there was no party. Soon the spectators who had driven so far were cornering anyone with a badge, a festival t-shirt or a walkie-talkie, demanding their \$7 admission back. Arms went flailing in gestures of Mediterranean passion and the organizers took cover behind the armed soldiers. A few families got their money back; others got tickets for the next day.

As the crowds diminished in the afternoon heat, the wind picked up, a bit more with each car that roared away. As we were packing up the kites, up went the wind—and the show. The sky filled with color as a few lingering onlookers gazed up.

Then a police jeep pulled up with red lights flaring and announced that an unex-

ploded artillery shell had been found near the children's play area and that all the kites must come down and the field vacated for the detonation. We all waited on the hill overlooking the scene until a loud bang sounded and black smoke drifted over the field.

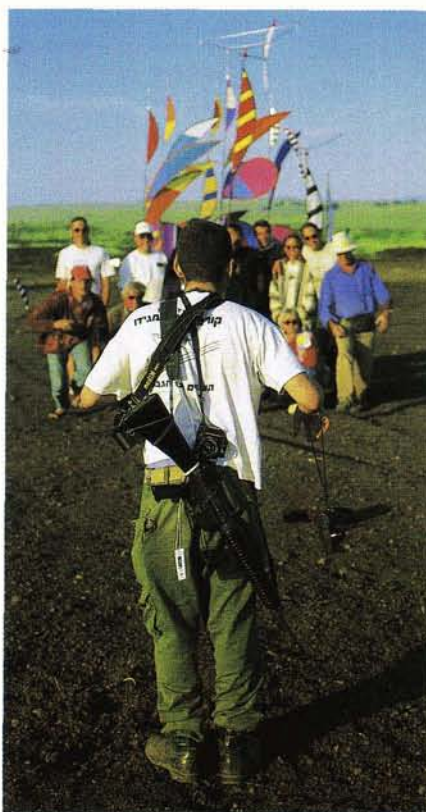
The second day brought wind along with heavy gray curtains of rain up and down the countryside. Solano Car-

denas dashed for the plastic cover each time the drops would come, covering his delicate masterworks while the rest of us hid under nylon kite umbrellas. The sun popped out occasionally. A few optimistic spectators braved the day.

As the kites rose up and fluttered down on the field of bad dreams, two tanks roared by with gun turrets whirling, aimed at our kites overhead.

The wind finally picked up. The show filled the sky. I lost my large Kite Roach into a nearby mine field when its line got cut and it drifted out of sight. I had to ask myself, stepping carefully down the road, avoiding the litter of shrapnel and bombs, how much do I really love to fly kites. Would I give my left leg?

**How much do I  
really love to  
fly kites?  
Would I give  
my left leg?**



**A soldier takes our group picture: Please don't shoot with the wrong trigger!**



**George Peters poses in his new wind garden.**

As the sun set, the kite artists gathered for one last picture. An armed soldier draped with our cameras took last parting shots of our war-torn group. "Don't shoot the one slung over your back, please!" Click, click, click.

After a long drive down the Syrian-Jordanian border, we visited Jerusalem to see the

sights, then spent a couple of days of rest and recreation in the seaside community of Herzliya north of Tel Aviv.


That bright Sunday on the beach, perfect breezes brought a second impromptu festival out of our bags. "This is the place! Put them all up!" Soon the beach sands danced with kite shadows. A small group of beach bathers lay under the kites watching them dance overhead. It was perfect. No loudspeakers, no guards to defend our humble sky fest, no fences to keep out the crowds, no mines, no tanks—just kites and happy smiles on a sunny, windy day. We flew until it was time to dash to the airport. I reluctantly put my kites back in my bag.

Just a bit of wind. That's all we need. Kite-flying can be such a simple pleasure. ◇

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# ITALY

## a bigger yet more intimate Cervia

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY MEL GOVIG



Bubbly, tireless Beatrice and Bernd Hellwage of Germany fly a number of outstanding kites, including the one above based on the Tri-D-Box. Inset: Italian father and son Ettore and Vittorio Callegaro make intricate sculpted kites, such as this miniature Chinese dragon; Ettore assembles the frames, Vittorio covers and paints them.

Ten years ago, we visited Cervia on our first trip to Europe. It was a lasting experience of close camaraderie, gracious hospitality, wonderful food and a permanent bond to the Italian kite community. It was good to be back—but would it be the same?

Well, it was better!

Start with the location. On my first morning I strolled down the beach three miles to visit the Bagno Pubbico, site of the first and other festivals at Cervia. It was still as small and pretty as I had remembered it. But for 1995 the site was the Riviera del Pini, a beach south of the city where two of the hostels, not yet serving regular clientele, were opened for kites.

The festival was only one block from our hostel and spread over 1,000 yards of beach. Though this beach was larger, it was still relatively narrow and intimate, just big enough for the excellent selection of guests: over 100 visitors from 24 countries.

Cervia's organizers, led by Mauro Andreucci, evidently modeled their "kite village" and schedule after the festival in Dieppe, France. It could hardly have been more convenient. Each



A superb bird kite by Li Rou Xin of Beijing. Xin was a constant presence every day. Although he spoke only Chinese, his kites and his good humor spoke volumes to everyone he met.

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NAME:

Tutto il Mondo Volà a Cervia  
(Italy World Kite Festival 1995)

WHICH ANNUAL: 15th

DATES: May 18–28, 1995

LOCATION: Cervia, Italy

SITE: Riviera del Pini beach

ORGANIZERS: Mauro Andreucci &

Claudio Capelli



French pleasures: near right, Claude Quessada's handlebar mustache is almost upstaged by his handsome cellular kite; far right, Joel Thézé and his wife Martine Chatel fly one of their several eye-capturing gossamer creations.



country's team was provided with a sun shelter facing the beach. At night, all kites were secured and guarded.

The wide range of winds over the 10 days allowed equal time in the sun for high-wind fliers (Aimé Barsalou of Canada, Francesco Innisi of Italy) and low-wind fliers (Li Ruo Xin of China, Annick Gosselin of France, Poul Christoffersen of Denmark, Hideo Matsutani of Japan).



Claudette Gosselin at the French stand shows one of the many miniatures made by her and her husband Guy. They even had a mini Cody manlift system and a complex Malinski box.

In a large section of beach in front of the grandstands, all the fliers were introduced to the many appreciative spectators. Announcements were made in Italian and other languages by Claudio Capelli and Mauro, making sure that everyone felt included. This style of management created a cohesive and festive atmosphere.

Perhaps the presence of Peter Lynn is one measure of a festival's ambition. He was everywhere—buggying, boating and flying a multitude of inflatables, including his newest, Trilobite, 15 yards long, a prototype for what is to be his attempt at the world record for largest kite.

Apart from the kites, the most enjoyable part of the festival for me was the interaction between guests and tourists. Matsutani helped to bridle the *sode* kite for Eli Shavit of Israel and painted samurai on T-shirts, bare bodies and his own small kites. Throughout the week, Malaysian crafters carved paper, shaved bamboo and assembled their classic *wau* kites. Sari Madjid of Indonesia gave away dozens of fighter kites to the spectators. Pinch-hitting translations were made by Olive Barsalou for Ukrainians Alexei and Nadezhda Zverik and by Ong Lang Tee of Malaysia and Sachiko Modegi of Japan for Chinese Li Rou Xin. Don Mock of the USA took spectators from the crowd, handed them his kite line and said, "Hold this for a

minute." He would find a pretext to go away, then come back and talk to them, all the time letting them fly the kite, sometimes for 10 or 15 minutes. The congeniality of the kites and the quality of the kites go beyond the limits of these pages.

Near the end of the week, Norwegians Terje Westfoss and Egil Syverson bought some local fat, fuzzy sash cord, attached it to a delta and carried it around calling it "Norwegian fighting line." As a Norwegian-heritage American, I was especially amused by this. It was my spoonful of whipped cream on the capuccino of Cervia. ◇



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## Verdun shines through the drizzle

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY VALERIE GOVIG



Arching above: Randy Tom of California readies his ribbons, a fabulous Disney filmstrip (500 hours of work!) and his flags of the world, while Frank Schwiemann of Germany lofts his comely ribbon arch train. Inset: Barry Poulter's astonishing Betty Boop Edo-type kite flown by the Boop Troop of England; and a diaphanous mermaid kite by Thérèse Uguen of France.

**V**erdun is not yet the Dieppe of North America. But it's the only kite festival that is *trying* to be. This year the effort to match the French model was particularly valiant because the budget was down and the weather was disagreeable. But the committee kept on.

The Rendez-Vous Mondial du Cerf-Volant has so much promise and so many rewards almost in spite of itself that kites

accord it the title it obviously covets: the Premier Kite Festival of North America, or (as they would prefer to say in Québec) *La Plus Grande Fête du Cerf-Volant d'Amérique du Nord*.

Why is this? Purely because the organizers manage to bring in the largest contingent of prominent overseas kites of any festival on this continent. This fact reflects less on the success of Verdun than the short-

comings of North America. This year about 80 guests arrived, representing 12 countries. The guests are chosen to exemplify a variety of kites and cultures, and when mixed together the broth is rich. Necessarily, the Verdun list is not ideal by an absolute standard; it is compromised by such practical concerns as the need for spectacle or reputation to



Left, a jester rokkaku is serious sewing by Randy Tom. Above, a genki kite as a house with laundry on the line is the whimsy of Adrian Pierorazio of Kingston, Ontario.

NAME: Rendez-Vous Mondial du Cerf-Volant (World Kite Gathering)

WHICH ANNUAL: 3rd

DATES: June 1-4, 1995

LOCATION: Verdun, Québec, Canada

SITE: Parc Therrien on the St. Lawrence River

ORGANIZERS: Team of seven for the

Rendez-Vous Mondial du Cerf-Volant  
non-profit corporation





Pierced sails are said to sometimes improve flight rather than impair it. For example, left, a sode kite by Willi Koch of Germany, and below, the latest appliqué masterwork by Jose Sainz of California.



attract a crowd. But the compromises barely show. It's still a big event.

The crowds flock in (about 75,000 this year despite rain through two of the four days). They fill the stands, cheer, snap photos, buy t-shirts and take turns flying kites with the guests. The fliers, in turn, enjoy the chance to meet fellow fanatics and see inspiring kites.

When you are as steeped in kites as some of us, your perspective is skewed. At Verdun this year I especially noticed how this cutting-edge group of fliers revealed kiting's latest trends (see box). Any one kiter may be barely conscious of it, but in a group a trend becomes fascinatingly apparent.

We had time to reflect on such things as we milled around in the tents and the school

adjacent to the fields. Although heavy showers drowned our kites and wiped out the fabled Verdun night fly, we made and flew kites indoors and took full advantage of the chance to mingle. When at last Sunday brought sun and wind, a frenzy of kiteflying made up for



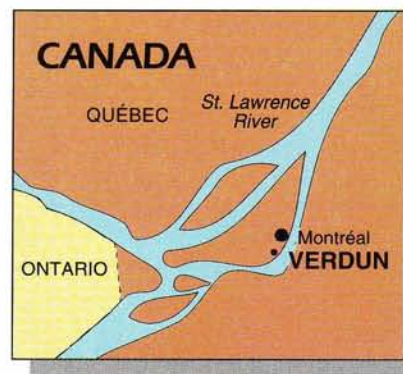
How low-aspect-ratio can you go? From left: Stacked Charlies by Californians Ron and Sandy Gibian; Frank Schwiemann's three slim kites effectively joined; tiny 9-inch-wide goblin by Robert Trépanier of Montréal; experimental kite made by Roberto Guidori of Italy for Tai Streeter of New York.

## TRENDS SEEN AT VERDUN

- Extremely low aspect-ratio kites
- Pierced sail areas
- Sode or kimono kites in increasing variety
- Genkis and rokkakus still running strong
- Arches in all varieties, namely:
  1. Arch Trains, the original 1987 design by Eiji Ohashi of Japan, with reversible dihedral in otherwise conventional tailed Eddy kites about 14 inches tall flown in trains.
  2. Arch Ribbons, first designed in 1988 by France's Étienne Veyres, modified by several others since. (See *Design Workshop*, page 20.)
  3. Arch Ribbon Trains, designed in 1993 by Gerhard Blattert of Germany, consisting of a string (literally) of kites, typically 20-inch-tall fabric Eddys with tails. The kites have spines only; continuous cord or ribbon replaces the cross-spar. The kites are flown shoulder-to-shoulder (or they may be as far apart as a kite's width), in the same plane laterally, not fore and aft of their mates. The kites essentially form an arch ribbon with gaps, but they look like a conventional train at first glance. An arch ribbon train is almost childishly easy to make—you have just read the full instructions for it!

the previous disappointment.

The Rendez-Vous organizers do learn from experience. For example, Canadian kites aren't the festival's poor relations anymore but instead are generously featured. As long as this essentially caring attitude prevails, Montréal will continue to be a magnet for kitefliers. ◇



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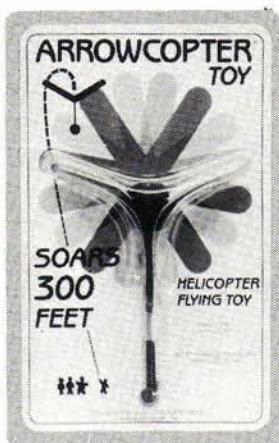


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# KITE ART EXHIBITIONS

Coming Soon to a Festival

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## A CHRONOLOGY OF RECENT KITE ART EXHIBITS

● June 1987: *The Hague Air Gallery*, premiering at Scheveningen, The Netherlands and consisting of 21 Edo-style kites of nylon and fiberglass, constructed by Vlieger Op kite shop and painted by noted artists. Organized by Gerard van der Loo and Els Lubbers. The kites have appeared elsewhere since the debut, sometimes flying and sometimes in exhibitions.

● May 1988: *Künstdrachen (Art Kites)*, consisting of over 100 kites made collaboratively by Japanese kitemakers and world-renowned painters. Vernissage in Himeji, Japan, followed by a world tour to museums in 15 cities over five years, attracting two million visitors. Organized by Dr. Paul Eubel and Ikuko Matsumoto of the Goethe Institut Osaka. Elegantly documented in videos and catalogs in several languages. Selected kites were flown on three occasions, the last in January 1995 in Sydney, Australia. The original plan to auction off the kites has been replaced by a decision to establish an Art Kite Museum in a city in Germany or Japan.

● March 1991: *Masks in the Air*, cotton rokkakus built by Yael Padova Levi and painted by 13 major Israeli artists were flown and displayed as part of a festival held three days after the end of the Gulf War on the beach of Herzliya. The kites were later exhibited at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

● September 1992: *Heavenly Museum*, initiated by Dan Reusser of Zweisimmen, Switzerland, including 43 Tyvek rokkaku kites made by the three-person "Windmaschine" group, painted by 43 artists and flown in Sparenmoos. The kites were also displayed in February 1993 in Bern before they were sold.

● December 1992: *AIDES rokkaku kite auction* in Paris, France of 150 rokkakus built by volunteers for the AIDES association (founded to help AIDS victims), decorated and signed by celebrities. A gross total of 310,00 francs (over \$56,000 US) was raised.

● April 1993: *Imparando a Volare: Edo in Liberta (Learning to Fly Art: Edos in Freedom)*, 10 Edo kites built of ripstop and fiberglass by Gruppo Aquilonisti Vulandra, Ferrara, Italy, and painted by 10 local artists. Flown at the Vulandra Kite Festival, then the Chioggia Festival. Displayed in seven other places in Italy to date.

● June 1993: *The World on a String*, an exhibition of 13 international kitemakers, debuted at the Pacific Science Center, Seattle, Washington, then toured three U.S. cities. To be at Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida, September 9-24, 1995.

In January 1996, the kites will be auctioned by mail to benefit the Long Beach, Washington World Kite Museum. Organized by the Drachen Foundation.

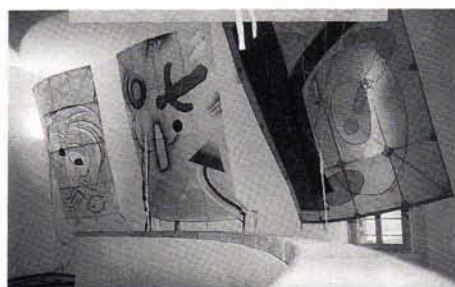
● July 1994: *European Air Gallery*, initiated by the City of Sunderland (England) Libraries and Arts, including 12 Edo-style kites of nylon and fiberglass built by Vlieger Op, Netherlands and painted by artists. Debuted at the 1994 International Kite Festival, Washington, Tyne & Wear, England, July 1994. Flights to be hosted through 1995 at four European festivals, culminating in an artists' symposium at the festival in Sunderland, July 1996.

● August-November 1994: Arvada Center for the Arts & Humanities, Arvada, Colorado international kite exhibit (part of *Bikes, Kites & Puppets*), curated by George Peters, assisted by Scott Skinner. Featuring over 75 full-size kites and 40 miniatures, the event included a kite festival in surrounding fields.

● Mid-January 1995: *Art Volant*, organized for the opening of the Pont de Normandie, a new bridge across the Seine river between Le Havre and Honfleur, France. French artists painted 53 Edo-style kites constructed by Ludovic Petit. A kite flight planned near the bridge for its inauguration was canceled because of 60 mph winds, but an exhibition of the kites was successful. The kites were flown in April at the Berck-sur-Mer Rencontres Internationales de Cerf-Volant.



Claudio Capelli's self-portrait kite for the European Air Gallery in Cervia, Italy, 1995.



Edo-style kites on display made by the Vulandra Club and painted by artists in Italy.

## A COMMENT ON ART VOLANT

This project was mainly financed by the Chamber of Commerce of Le Havre and it was decided to involve only contemporary-style painters established in the Normandy area.

Most paintings were very good, but once again kites just replaced ordinary canvases. This makes me sad because I believe kites themselves should be part of the artwork. There is quite a difference between paintings on kites and kites themselves as art pieces.

For any artist there is certainly much more interesting and creative work to do in designing the kite, its shape and its structure along with its surface aspect and coloring. My own feeling towards all projects of this kind, involving painters on one side and kitemakers on the other, is that they widely fail to show what kite art should really be.

It is a shame that an artist like Alain Chevalier, in my opinion one of the five best kite artists in the western world, who himself lives in Normandy and exhibited his works several times there, was not even asked to participate by the organizers of the *Art Volant* project.

It is more than time for art gallery owners and museum curators to realize that the artist and the kitemaker can, and even should be, the same person. It's true that these kite artists are very few and often not very well-known. Yet their work should get better exposure precisely on these occasions when kites are shown as art.

Those who pretend to create a kite art event and who still ignore the few remarkable artists who have dedicated at least a few years of their life to kites, are definitely missing the real thing.

—Pierre Fabre

## A GENERAL COMMENT ON KITE EXHIBITS

The spate of serious exhibits of kites as art has been energizing.

We could classify the exhibits into two groups, two ways, or in a matrix, like this:

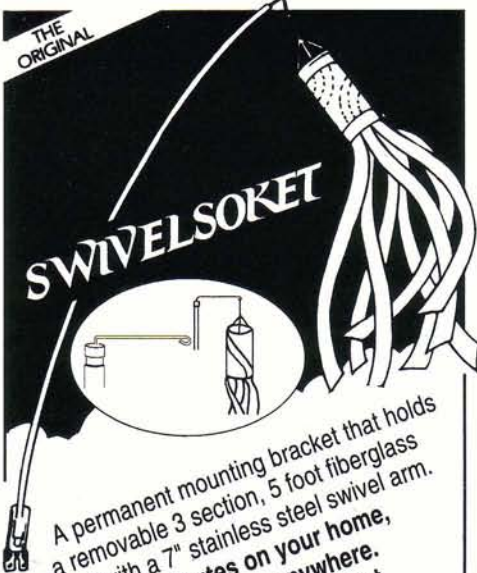
Source	Presentation
A. Kite artists*	+ Flying incorporated
B. Collaborations	— Gallery showing only

\*Responsible for total structure as well as surface design.

We could "grade" kite exhibits as A+, A-, B+ or B-. Yes, there is a parallel to school marks. Should anyone make judgments like this? We invite reader comment.

—Valerie Govig





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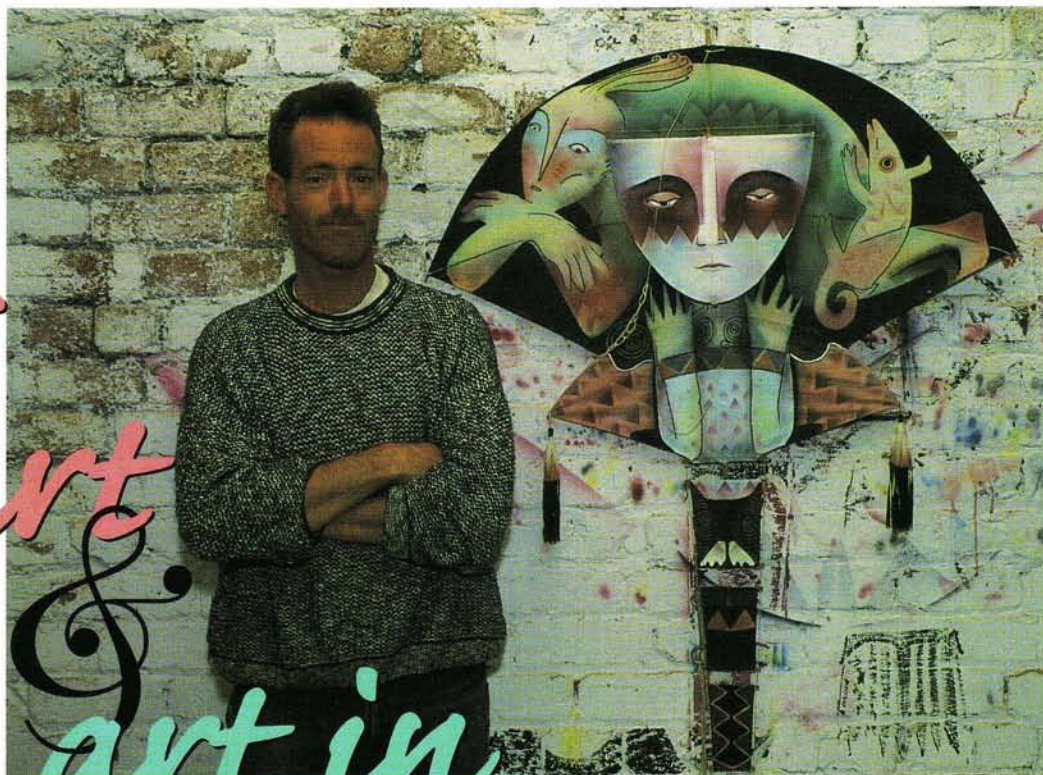
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# Steve Brockett

interview & photographs by  
PIERRE FABRE

## kites in art & art in kites



Top, Steve Brockett poses in his workshop with Angel and the Dreamer. Above, the artist holds Cat Angel atop a bollard at Cardiff's docks.

Steve Brockett's kites are among the most creative in the Western world. Unlike most kitemakers, Brockett paints his kites, combining figurative and symbolic graphics of mystical strength with original shapes. Some of his kites seem to contain a whole world of their own, referring to some imaginary legend or tale. They show plenitude and balance as well as movement, some using the wind for kinetic effects.

Brockett has also organized several sky theater shows, using his kites as characters that interact with unpredictable winds.

Brockett is 35 years old, born in England but a lifelong resident of Wales. He earned a fine arts degree from Cardiff Institute, Faculty of Art and Design. For the past 10 years, his main creations have been kites; they have been exhibited in many art galleries in the United Kingdom.

In the backyard garden in front of his workshop, we had a long talk about his work with kites, about kites in art and art in kites...

**PF:** Why do you make kites? You could have stuck to painting!

**SB:** Kites bring a new dimension. It's not because I want to make "paintings in the sky"—it's completely different. It's the synthesis of painting, sculpture and flight: three elements that make a kite what it is.

**PF:** Do you design each kite for a specific environment?

**SB:** No, because the sky is an abstract concept, a vast space that is always changing. ...I feel my kites should look good in the air but also hanging on a wall.

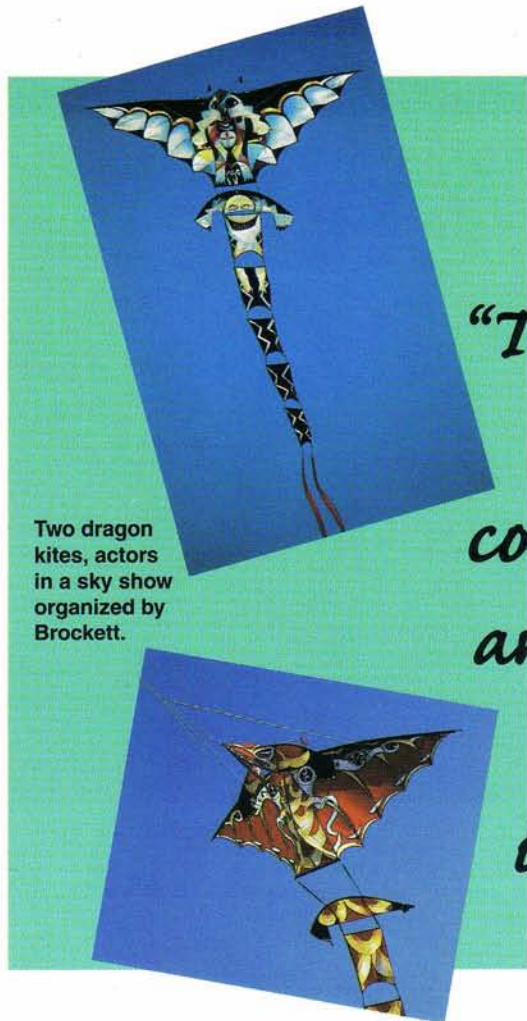
**PF:** What about the landscape beneath the sky?

**SB:** I don't design kites for the landscape, but I am beginning to realize that landscape does have an effect on what I make. I spend time in Spain every year, and the colors of the land and quality of light certainly have a significant influence.

**PF:** If you had to label your works, would you call them paintings, sculptures or kites?

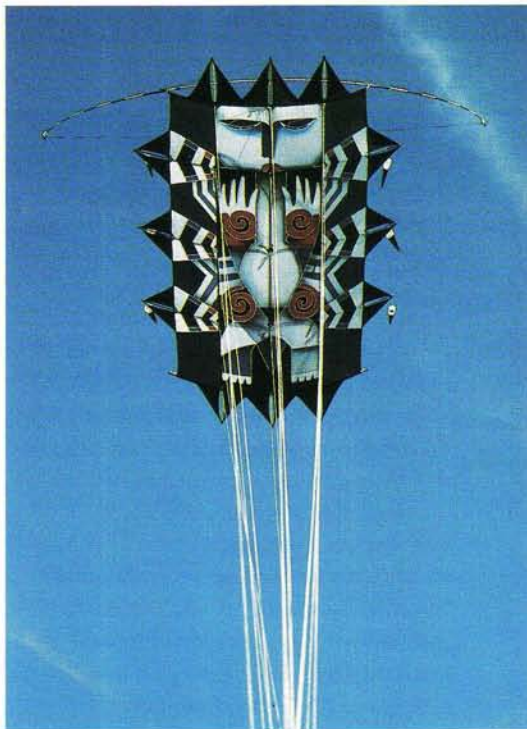
**SB:** I would like to just call them kites, because kites are what they are and that says enough about them. But when you're dealing with an art gallery, you have to call them art kites or sculptures. But the kite is





Two dragon kites, actors in a sky show organized by Brockett.

*"The kite is a complete art form in itself."*



Top right, Brockett's painting technique lets the light come through in his Angel kite. Far left, *Ida the Glider*. Left, *Dreamcatcher*. Above, sketch for a flying elephant.

Opposite page, Brockett holds up two sister bird kites, miniatures in paper and bamboo.

a complete art form in itself. It doesn't need to borrow similarities from painting or sculpture or performances: it has all these elements.

**PF:** How did you come to kites—was it sudden?

**SB:** No, it was slow. Looking back, it was a logical progression from the paintings. I was looking for a metaphor for change, to

deal with things like chance. The wind just seemed to be the perfect metaphor because it's not seen but it can be felt through the other senses. In 1985, I was given Pelham's *The Penguin Book of Kites* and was fascinated

by leaf and bird shapes I had never seen before. Then kites came into my drawings. Also, I was frustrated with painting and having lots of troubles just finishing a painting. It always ended up being overworked



and the life in it was killed. When I was given that kite book, I made a simple kite, an arch-top, painted it and flew it in a graveyard. The painting was somehow resolved once the kite was in the air. Also I was frustrated with painting because I needed to build, to create, to construct. Making a stretch of raw canvas wasn't enough. The only thing I knew when I left art school was that I wanted to be an artist, to create things. But I also knew I didn't want to just work in a studio, making paintings and exhibiting in galleries. It all seemed very stale, a monotonous life-style—you would shut away, and then you would bring the paintings out for display and only a certain kind of people would see your work. If you were lucky, someone would buy it...

**PF:** Then comes the question—What is art?

**SB:** It's an incredibly personal thing. For some people it can only be painting and sculpture, for others it is filmmaking, cooking, performing... For some people it's a whole range of things—living, walking, every action is art.

**PF:** When does walking become art?

**SB:** When it moves you! My definition of good art is something that moves you. Art is all about communication. If it doesn't communicate to you, it has failed.

**PF:** Can you put any kite in a gallery and call it art?

**SB:** The way people perceive art is contextual, that is, you see—but your visual sense is advised by your previous knowledge and sometimes historical attitudes. This would usually prevent a mass-produced plastic kite, for example, being considered art.

**PF:** Can some things become art even if their creator was not aware of it?

**SB:** Yes, it definitely can happen.

**PF:** What is not art if anything can be art?

**SB:** Plenty of horrible things, sometimes precisely what people like to call art! Copying is not art.

**PF:** Yet in so many Asian countries, people are dedicated to reproducing traditional patterns.

**SB:** But that is craftsmanship, not art. Art is about creation, developing new things. It has to be towards something new even if it's not completely new. Of course we all borrow things here and there.

**PF:** In a 23rd century museum, will kites be shown as a 20th-century art form?

**SB:** Yes, I hope so. ...There are more and more festivals. As that sort of education goes on, then the standards will have to be higher. People who come to festivals year after year don't want to see the same things or anything that's visually bad.

**PF:** Is kitemaking an art or a craft?

**SB:** That's a better question than "What is art?"—it is more reasonable! Kitemaking is both. There are elements of kitemaking that expand into superb craftsmanship. When

*"Good art is something that moves you."*



craftsmanship becomes incredible, like that of the Japanese kites, then it can translate into an art form. I don't think it's enough to say that the kite, because it functions, is craft.

**PF:** Kites fly, but this flight is useless!

**SB:** Not always. They can pull buggies! Some crafts, like ceramics, are now considered art even though they are functional.

**PF:** Does your painting on a kite have more a meaning function or more a decorative function?

**SB:** Both. It is vital to the meaning of the kite. Kites are designed from feelings and sometimes they have narratives or things I want to say. But I don't make kites just for visual things. I'm very much involved in trying to portray, I suppose, other elements, sometimes unseen. You're dealing with issues and ideas that you can't talk about because language isn't enough, and they have much more to do with intuition and feelings, with unconscious ideas.

**PF:** Would you make unpainted kites?

**SB:** At the moment my forms are more abstracted and at times I think that maybe appliqué is much more suited to them. But

then, there's a quality and a feeling that I get in painting that you can't have when sewing together pieces of colors. One of those is graduation in color to give depth to an abstract image. It's part of the process of how I make the kite that even if the shapes and designs are flat I can give depth by shaping and graduating color.

**PF:** Have you been inspired by other famous artists' works?

**SB:** First I was interested in things like North American Indian Art: the old ritual masks, transformation masks. These were visually strong and very graphic and had a tremendous sense of power to them.

Then I seemed to get inspired by objects more than by any painting by some famous painter...just made objects, for instance a piece of jewelry or especially objects from other cultures, from different sensibilities. The artist who influences me most is Paul Klee. He worked with images from the unconscious yet applied a rationale to create pictures that possess an extraordinary power.

**PF:** Among kite artists, are there some who inspired your own work? For instance, does seeing other kites change your own designs?

**SB:** Yes, definitely. I like to see how people solve problems, especially their techniques in kitemaking. That's really important, to learn and share ideas. Probably my kites are a lot better now

because of that.

**PF:** Do you think it's important to make kites with a good finish?

**SB:** Yes.

**PF:** Perfect stitching?

**SB:** Not stitching. For myself, the whole thing about making a kite is that it should feel "right." ... At the moment, the kites I am making wouldn't feel so resolved if they were rough and badly made.

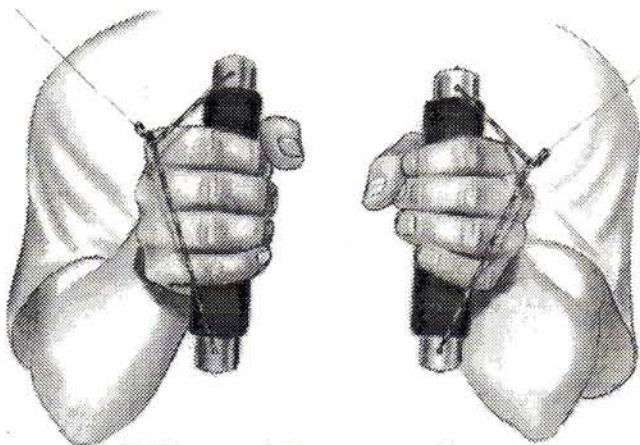
**PF:** Do you remember the kites by Aimé Barsalou of Canada that we saw at Dieppe?—their "imperfect" craftsmanship...

**SB:** Yes, that's what I'm saying. ...Aimé makes kites like that because he is like that. It is not right or wrong, it's just the way he is. My own kites are the way I am... Kites don't have to be perfect. In fact, perfection in kites sometimes I find quite irritating. When you make a kite so well, sometimes you kill off what you plan to do. There's no life in it, it looks robot-made!

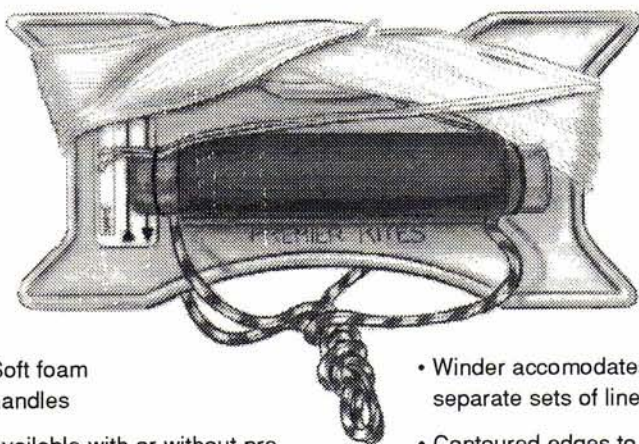
**PF:** What about all these animals and characters on your kites? Do they tell stories? Stories that you invent?

**SB:** Yes, mostly stories I invent but I do





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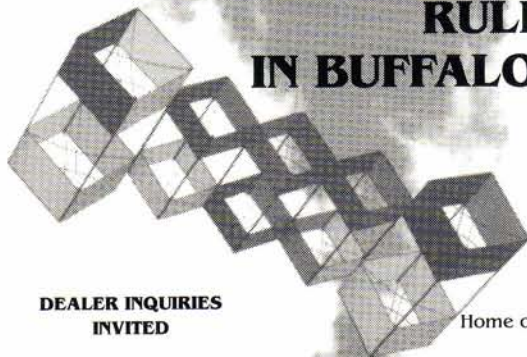
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borrow ideas, images and meanings. I use favorite things like lizards, blackbirds, crows, chameleons...

**PF:** *Why do you like them?*

**SB:** They have qualities about them as animals and creatures that I need to have and that I relate to. I like that. Pretty much all my kites have faces. I like the kites to have an identity. But I also like to have relationships within a kite, so the images are composed of relationships, usually between human and animal. The way we communicate with animals is totally different from the way we communicate with people.

**PF:** *Could kites keep you busy for the rest of your life?*

**SB:** Yes, definitely. It's difficult to predict what will happen, but they haven't deceived me so far. I started 10 years ago and I still have so many ideas that I haven't tried yet. A lot of people say, "do you still paint?" or "Do you still do art?"—proper art. All of the questions I had about the art I wanted to do, the kites kept answering them. The kite is available, it's immediate, it's enjoyable, it's fun, outdoors it's great... There is no difference now between painting and kites for me: the kite is the art-piece.

**PF:** *So now I ask you: Do you still paint on paper or canvas?*

**SB:** Recently I have been making small paintings, that are not kite designs. I would like to make some bigger paintings. I do enjoy the physicality of paint.

**PF:** *Switching to technical matters, could you tell me about your choice of materials and painting techniques?*

**SB:** I spent a year and a half exploring many different fabrics, from silks to pure cotton, and learning about various different dye materials, dyeing technology and chemistry. I'm still at the very beginning of what the potential is with the new inks.

**PF:** *Do you still use bamboo?*

**SB:** Sometimes yes, when bamboo is best. For example, when you need spars that don't bend symmetrically or when you make a shape in a certain form... I'd like to use bamboo more because I love working with it. The disadvantage with bamboo is that I wasn't successful in making collapsible kites with it. I have tried various joints and things without much success. Bamboo and paper kites have such an enduring quality that I feel myself being drawn back to this way of working for the future. As with many things, searching for the essence requires a gradual shedding of complexities that confuse issues. I would like to imagine the last kite I will ever make will be small, unassuming and simple, and probably just called "kite."

**PF:** *What kinds of kites will you be making 10*



## of dogs & kites

**PF:** Once you made a dog kite...

**SB:** It was a very angry dog. Every time I run into dogs they are very aggressive, I don't know why. Kite-eating dogs... I went to fly a kite in a park and had kites pissed on by a dog. That was classic. You make a kite for a commission, go to test-fly it in the park, then the dog cocks its leg and the owner say, "Oh, sorry!" I say, "But, but, you know this kite, I sold it!" and he says, "Do you want five pounds?"

years from now? Will they be very different?

**SB:** I hope so! I am always on the lookout for new colors, new processes. I find the kites I'm making now are a big change from my previous ones. That's mainly because of the influence of my trip to India, its shrines and places of worship. As long as you keep getting inspired...

**PF:** What does it bring to you when you show your kites to the public at festivals?—a public which often does not consider kites an art form?

**SB:** There's an incredible sense of wonder when a kite just lifts off from your hand—you almost can't believe it is doing that. Kites can be appreciated on so many levels. You don't need to be interested in art to appreciate a kite; that's what so nice about it. If you make something that flies, and it looks good, it's a great reward. You don't need people to come up and buy it to feel rewarded. ...You get your own feedback. Also I prefer to show my kites to crowds rather than to the limited public of art galleries. ...In painting, a good way to step back from your work and see it is by putting a frame around your painting, because suddenly you've removed it from your touch: it's finished and you put it on a white wall. It's similar with a kite. You put it in the sky and you've got it at that distance. It's removed.

**PF:** When making kites, are you looking for appreciation from other people?

**SB:** It's a very dangerous way to be. When you make kites only for appreciation or to sell, it's like a death—maybe not death—an inhibitor. Recently I've been through stages where I felt like that. People were telling me: "Do this, it's like your old style, it's much nicer..." I have to get over it. You go through so many barriers... If you do something only because it's successful you usually end up hating it. It never works.

**PF:** How long have you been making a living from kites?

**SB:** I'll start soon!



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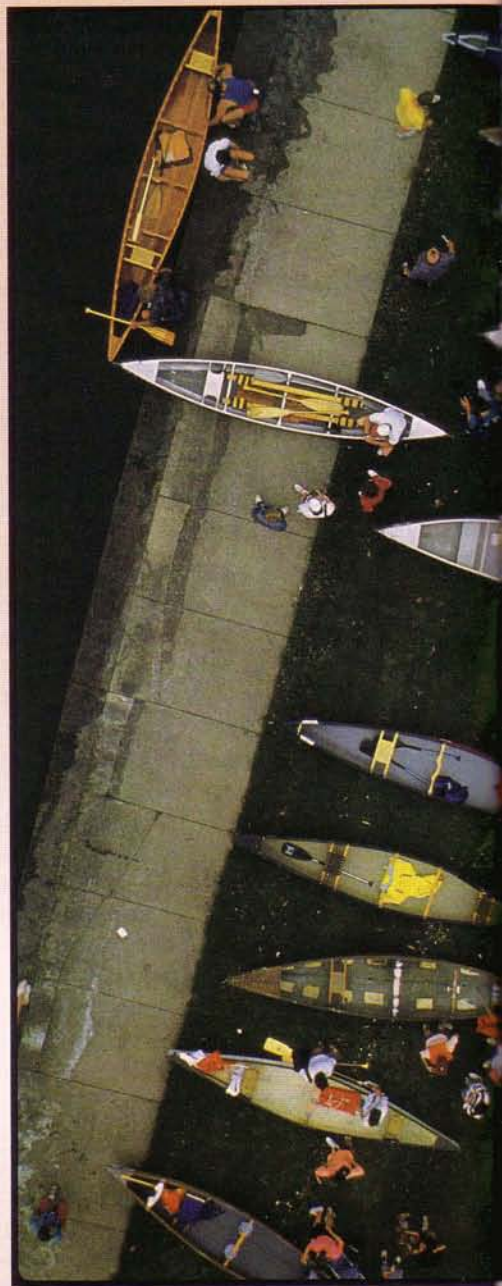
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# Taking an aerial view...

By Craig Wilson

**B**ecause I put so much of myself into designing, constructing, tuning and refining my equipment and technique, the magical combination of camera and kite is a powerful driving force in my life.

As a kite builder and flier it is thrilling to use the kite as a tool, doing the work of lifting the weight of the camera. Finding ways to combine pieces that you discover in hobby and hardware stores into a useful apparatus to hold and control your camera is a tremendously satisfying use of your creative processes. And as a photographer it is exciting to take my camera to places that only birds can go.

One day in 1987 I was holding a newly-built delta down with my left hand and

holding a camera up with my right hand, to take a picture of the kite. The entire neighborhood lit up as the light bulb above my head went off and I realized, "Yes, this kite would lift the weight of this camera." For the next several months the thought gnawed at me to find a way to make it work. I had an old camera that I figured I could use. If I wrecked it, I just wouldn't tell anyone.

I found a way to hold the camera to the kite line by taking parts from a line climber, some aluminum strapping, a small piece of threaded rod, a couple of bolts and wing nuts and a few scissors in the garage. So far the process had been smooth—but what about getting the camera to actually take a picture? Tripping the shutter while the cam-

era was up in the air, suspended under the kite, was a problem that was going to take some study.

I would have to ask others for advice: camera store clerks, hardware salespeople, hobby shop managers and whoever might listen to me talk about the imaginary, nameless little part that I needed to... you know. I was met with strange looks of incredulity and I think the Ace hardware man thought I was on drugs.

Then the obvious hit me. Maybe *Kite Lines* could help. I sent for the Spring-Summer 1980 issue, which had the article "Kite Aerial Photography: Who's Doing It and How." In the article, I saw the part I needed—a dethermalizing timer. Two weeks





## *where only birds can go!*

later I had the timer in my hand and headed out to my garage to set it all up. To test the theory meant epoxying the timer to the back of the camera. Several hours later, with the sweet smell of epoxy still wafting through the garage, I knew the theory was sound. To this day I equate the smell of epoxy with success.

But I still had to test it. It took most of a Saturday afternoon to raise the camera, wait for the timer to go off, bring the camera down, wind the film ahead, adjust the aim, reset the timer and lift the camera back up. I repeated 24 times. Conclusion number one: 12 exposure rolls would be good.

With anticipation rivaling that of my six-year-old on Christmas Eve, I picked up

the photos from the lab. Wow, it worked—beautiful, blurry, out-of-focus shots of what I recognized as my house and yard.

Thus began my evolutionary process in aerial photography. The next step was a camera that would “automagically” take a picture every 60 seconds and advance the film itself. The answer was Ricoh Shotmaster, \$150 worth of raw power, nothing epoxyed to the back of this baby. Next came a better camera cradle that uses an old six-minute darkroom timer so the Ricoh camera can do a 360 degree spin as it takes pictures. Then I got an even better camera—a Ricoh KR10m and a radio-controlled rig to allow me to control elevation angle, 360-degree rotation and shutter release from the ground while

the camera hangs below the kite. Hey, if I wreck it, I just won’t tell anyone.

**Opposite page, two views of the Iwo Jima Memorial, Washington, DC, May 20, 1995. The close-up reveals the statue’s grit, like war’s. Center, competitors preparing for the annual Paddle and Portage canoe race, Madison, Wisconsin, July 17, 1993.**

**Above, inflating hot air balloons for The Great Wisconsin Dells Balloon Rally, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, June 5, 1993.**

*Craig Wilson contributes to The Aerial Eye, a new publication affiliated with the AKA. He has upcoming exhibitions at the West Bend Arts Museum, West Bend, Wisconsin, August 9–September 17 and at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC, October 21.*



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## A Parabear

### 1 Mouthpiece for a Teddy Bear

From Adrian Pierorazio, Kingston, Ontario, Canada:

Recently I have developed this reliable drop mechanism using an inexpensive two-part key chain and an old trumpet mouthpiece.

The key chain has two key rings, one connected to a simple socket and the other to the stem of a spring-loaded release. The key chain is light and strong but separates easily when the stem is pressed.

In performing a jump, the teddy bear is attached to the trigger and lofted using a light lift line. The lift line travels through a small pulley (or ring) in the line of the lifting kite. Once the trigger reaches the pulley a gentle tug releases the daring bear.

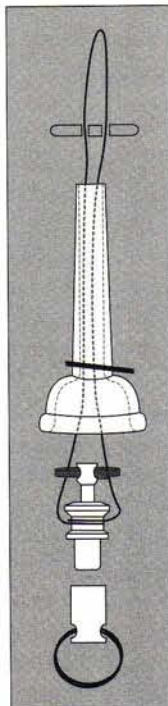
I used a trumpet mouthpiece because I had a few handy, and also because it provides enough weight to ensure the bear's lift line will return to the ground after

**The drop mechanism for a teddy bear.**

each drop. Thus I can leave my lifting kite in the air while performing multiple bear drops.

Follow these steps to parachute your bear or other fauna:

1. Remove the key ring from the trigger side of the key chain; this half will be the active component of the mechanism.
2. Cut a 24" piece of 24-30-lb Dacron polyester line. Tie one end securely around the body of the key chain release.
3. Feed the free end through the large end of the trumpet mouthpiece.
4. Using a large, sturdy button, feed the line through one hole and back through another hole.
5. Feed it back through the trumpet mouthpiece and tie it securely to the body of the key chain release.
6. At this point the mechanism is work-





## Proposal

able but not quite reliable because the trigger part may turn sideways when force is applied to release it. To remedy this, insert a nylon wire tie through the hole in the stem. Just make sure the tie wraps around the line on both sides of the stem.

When force is applied to the lift line, the end of the stem will be depressed regardless of the angle at which it hangs. The curved inside of the mouthpiece ensures that the force will be delivered to the stem at any angle.

7. Place the key ring that was removed from the key chain over the neck of the mouthpiece. This gives a convenient place to secure the static line that draws the bear's parachute out of the backpack.

8. Tie the other half of the key chain to the bear's parachute pack.

This mechanism is now well tested, though the first jump was somewhat unnerving for other reasons. It was the first jump for a bear named Petri, whose mission was to not only test previously untried equipment, but also to deliver a proposal of marriage to my now fiancée Heather. Needless to say, Petri was successful!

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From Walter J. Brick, Florence, Oregon:

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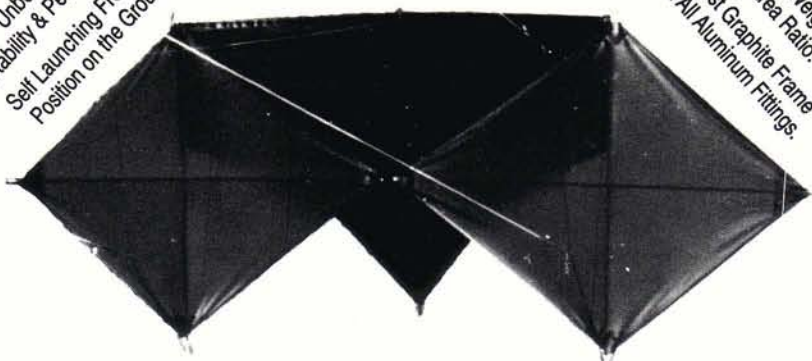


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# The Kite Lines Bookstore

serving the kiter's reading needs by mail

IF IT'S ABOUT KITES, the Kite Lines Bookstore probably has it—the common, the rare, the foreign, the domestic, the informative, the artistic, the good—and the bad. We carry nearly all the kite titles in print, even ones that give us a lot of trouble to obtain for you.

The Bookstore gives no endorsement to any

title, but we do guarantee your satisfaction with our service. We want you to feel like you're in your local bookstore. Pick a book. Look it over. If it's wrong for you, you can put it back on our shelf. No problem.

Kite books often go out of print without warning. If you want any of these, we suggest you snap them up now!

## OUT OF PRINT—LAST STOCKS AVAILABLE!

*Pictures for the Sky*, by Paul Eubel and Ikuko Matsumoto, in an English edition, revised from *Bilder für den Himmel* (Pictures for the Sky). Incredibly beautiful full-page color photos of kites made for the traveling exhibition. Includes the work of 100 international artists collaborating with 36 Japanese kitemakers. Softcover, 406 pp., \$78.95 (no airmail shipping)



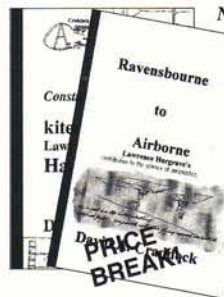
## From AUSTRALIA . . .



*Make Mine Fly* by Helen Bushell. This 1988 edition is an excellent collection of tips, techniques, and hints (gathered since 1977) for beginners, experts, groups or individuals. Includes plans for the author's famous patented Trefoil Delta, plus several paper kites. Softcover, 90 pp., \$22.95



*Kite-Folds* by Beth Matthews. This improved edition has plans for 12 small kites, easily made from a single sheet of paper, plus the "Skyloper." Clear instructions, lovely color photos, addendum on kites in teaching. Softcover, 36 pp., \$14.95



**NEW!** Lawrence Hargrave research by David A. Craddock, now in USA-printed edition at a price break: *Ravensbourne to Airborne* covers Hargrave's work on aerodynamics, gliders and kites, including his sketches of equipment, concepts, designs. No photos. Softcover, 57 pp., \$21.95 *Construction Drawings for a Selection of Kites*, companion volume of detailed plan drawings for a dozen moderate-size Hargrave kites. Softcover, 25 pp., \$14.95 Both books as package, \$34.95.

## From BERMUDA . . .

*Bermuda Kites* by Frank Watlington. Plans for five island kites, plus variations and hummers. Traditional methods and materials (flour and water paste: "a little cayenne pepper will keep away the roaches"). Flying tips, a little history. A charmer. Softcover, 24 pp., \$4.95



## From BRAZIL . . .

*Arte de Fazer Pipas 2 (The Art of Kitemaking 2)* by Silvio Voce, in Portuguese. How to make 10 non-Brazilian paper kites. Softcover, 56 pp., \$6.95 *Arte de Fazer Pipas 1* gives plans for 14 kites—half are Brazilian. Softcover, 50 pp., \$6.95 Both books as package, \$12.95



## From CANADA . . .

*Go Fly a Kite: The Kite Builder's Manual* by John Bostel. Novel plans; pleasing drawings, but lacking dimensions. Old-fashioned techniques. Softcover, 80 pp., \$12.95



## CANADA continued . . .



*Kite Crazy* (the book) by Carol Thomas. Accompanies the video. Plans for fighters, dual- and quad-liners. Reliable text, black-and-white drawings. Softcover, 176 pp., \$25.95 *Kite Crazy* (the video) by SOMA Film & Video, Canada. Famous kites teach how to make and fly 1-, 2- and 4-line kites. Good clear instructions and lovely footage, VHS format, 102 min., \$34.95 Special book/video package \$57.95



Richard P. Synergy's self-published books convey lots of information and enthusiasm: *Kiting to Record Altitudes* tells everything that can go wrong with altitude efforts. Softcover, 72 pp., \$15.95 *Stunt Kite Basics* covers safety, social aspects, equipment and maneuvers (32 in all). Emphasizes success in competitions. Softcover, 142 pp., \$15.95



*Fishing for Angels: The Magic of Kites* by David Evans. A very pretty, colorful book. Great kite lore and flying tips (just avoid the kite plans). Softcover, 63 pp., \$12.95

## From CHINA . . .



*Chinese Artistic Kites* by Ha Kuiming and Ha Yiqi. The celebrated kites of the Ha family of Beijing. History, structure, decoration, flight. Over 80 kites in richly printed color. Good English translation. Limited supplies. Softcover, 160 pp., \$16.95

## From ENGLAND . . .



*Kites: A Practical Handbook* by Ron Moulton and Pat Lloyd. A solid pack of information in slight disorder. Excellent drawings of 25-plus kites. Fine sections on sport kites and parachuting teddy bears. Outdated appendixes; some color photos. Softcover, 255 pp., \$27.95



*A Beginner's Guide to Flying Indian Fighter Kites* by Shirley Turpin. A well-compressed compendium of good advice gleaned from Stafford Wallace, British flier of Indian fighters. Discusses basic principles of fighter flying, line selection and handling, tuning, bridling, launching, changing direction, care, repairs, problem-solving. Simple but adequate black-and-white drawings. Softcover, 18 pp., \$4.95

## ENGLAND continued . . .

Mark Cottrell's books are homely and self-published, with plans that may call for a magnifying glass—but they are also some of the most honest, entertaining and useful in print:

*Kite Aerial Photography*. Three kite plans and a system to compare trade-offs among features in a rig. Source lists. Softcover, 44 pp., \$10.95

*Swept Wing Stunt Kites*. Analysis of stunt design elements; 4 plans. Softcover, 43 pp., \$11.95

*The Kite Store Book of Kites*. 10 plans for original Cottrell kites plus philosophy and a 5.25" disk for computer design. Softcover, 48 pp., \$13.95



*Box Kites Making and Flying* by Dr. Bill Cochrane. Plans for 17 types of box kites, from basic designs to Hargrave, Conyne and tetrahedral plus three Cody styles.

A little history and aerodynamics but out-of-date building methods. Color photos in attractive layout. Scanty appendixes. Hardcover, 96 pp., \$34.95





## The Kite Lines Bookstore . . . Continued

### ENGLAND continued

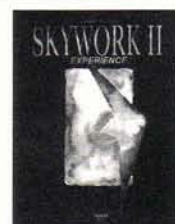


**Kite Cookery** by Don Dunford. Plans for four kites, with building methods. Includes Dunford's idiosyncratic aerodynamics. Softcover, 47 pp., \$4.95

### From GERMANY . . .



**Leistungsstarke Lenkdrachen zum Nachbauen** (High Performance Stunt Kites to Make) by Peter Rieleit, in German. Plans for 12 original dual-liners (six deltas, three foils and three figure kites, including Superfly, banana, pteranodon). A stimulating, motivating, creative work. Includes fine charts plus tips on materials, sewing, knots and flying. Softcover, 96 pp., plus full-size fold-out airfoil pattern, \$24.95



**Skywork II Experience** by Christine Schertel, in German. New volume following original Skywork Experience. Plans for 12 original, tested designs: nine stunts and three cellular kites, including a Hargrave, Cody and the "Revolver." Attractive paintings instead of photographs. Softcover, 52 pp., \$17.95

### GERMANY continued. . .

. . . und sie Fliegen Heute Noch — Geschichte und Geschichten um den Drachen (and They Still Fly Today—History and Tales about Kites) collected by Hans Snoek, in German. Poems, songs, tales, drawings, photos, plans from early days of Western kiting. Hardcover, 156 pp., \$34.95  
**Band II (Vol. II)**, in German. Another fascinating scrapbook of kite lore. Hardcover, 156 pp., \$34.95



Books by Werner Backes, in German, compact and reliable, have good ideas, instructions, color photographs and drawings: **Drachen bauen** (Kitemaking). This well-rounded volume contains 35 kite plans plus numerous accessories and tips. Excellent, detailed drawings and fine photos throughout. Softcover, 128 pp., \$18.95  
**Drachen aus aller Welt** (Kites from Everywhere). A 40-kite international sampler, including the Cloud Seeker, Cody, tetrahedral, rhombus and multicell boxes, parafoil, Rolo-plan and rokkaku. Also plans for trains, reels, aerial photography. Softcover, 128 pp., \$18.95  
**Neue drachen zum Nachbauen** (New Kites to Replicate). Plans for 20 kites (including a diamond stunter) from available materials plus techniques and accessories. Good for workshops. Softcover, 128 pp., \$7.95



### GERMANY continued. . .



Kite books by Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig, in German, contain choice building plans, techniques and flying tips in clear and colorful formats: **Lenkdrachen bauen und fliegen** (Making and Flying Stunt Kites). Contains 8 dual-liners (4 diamonds, 3 deltas and a foil), good information on knots and materials. Softcover, 64 pp., \$19.95  
**Neue Lenkdrachen und Einleiner bauen und fliegen** (New Stunt Kites and One-Liners to Make and Fly). Includes 6 stunts (one a quad-liner), 3 single-liners. Brief design theory. Softcover, 80 pp., \$19.95  
**Phantastische Drachenwelt: Die Festivals, Die Drachenbauer, Die Modelle** (Fantastic Kite World: The Festivals, The Kitemakers, The Models). A handsome coffee-table book of real substance. Insert has traceable plans for the Relax delta stunter, the Lilbelle by Till Krapp, the Millestelle by Maurizio Angeletti and Martin Lester's Legs. Hardcover, 128 pp., \$39.95 (no airmail shipping)

### GERMANY continued. . .



**Drachen mit Geschichte** (Kites with History) by Walter Diem and Werner Schmidt, in German. Extensively researched, faithfully reproduced models from our rich kiting history. Brogden, Gomes, Grund, Hargrave, Kuznetsov, Lamson, Lecornu, Sauls, others. Detailed plan drawings and wonderful historic photos. Hardcover, 160 pp., \$29.95

### From ITALY. . .



**Aquiloni (Kites)** by Guido Accascina, in Italian. A reliable mini encyclopedia, with kites in "family" groupings. Includes theory, techniques, sources, history, plans. Good printing including some color. Latest edition in standard pocketbook format. Softcover, 256 pp., now \$16.95



**Aquiloni Acrobatici** (Acrobatic Kites) by Cristina Sanvito and Giancarlo Galli, in Italian. The first Italian stunt kite book, a practical manual covering the basics and more. Graphics and drawings are neat and clear. Gives a brief history, safety tips, basic-to-advanced techniques and maneuvers plus a book list and valuable glossary translating standard English terms into Italian. Softcover, 141 pp., \$19.95

### From JAPAN . . .

**Tezukuri Omoshiro Dako Nyumon** (A Primer of Interesting Handmade Kites) by Eiji Ohashi, in Japanese. Both traditional Asian and modern kites are among these easy-to-make figure and box kites as well as Ohashi's famous arch train. Color photos, drawings, full details. Softcover, 100 pp., \$29.95



### From The NETHERLANDS . . .

Two stunt kite books by Servaas van der Horst and Nop Velthuisen, in English, cover all aspects of the sport in up-to-date high-tech style. Well organized and printed, the books contain excellent drawings and photos, including some in color: **Stunt Kites to Make and Fly**. The first book includes clear plans for 10 stunts, some with novel touches. Softcover, 96 pp., \$21.95  
**Stunt Kites II: New Designs, Buggies and Boats**. Plans for 8 kites plus advice on how to design your own. Emphasizes "power" kites, has plans for a buggy. Softcover, 96 pp., \$22.95  
**NEW!** Companion diskette 2.0 for IBM-compatibles, prints out templates of S.K.II plans; also simulates stunt maneuvers, \$19.95



### NETHERLANDS continued. . .



**Kleine Papieren Vliegers** (Small Paper Kites) by Harm van Veen, in Dutch. A very original, colorful little book with clear and detailed plans for 10 artful miniatures plus a tiny reel. Complete techniques, even splitting bamboo. Softcover, 32 pp., \$7.95

### From SWITZERLAND . . .



**Drachenreise** (Kite Journey) by Ruedi Epple-Gass, in German. Interesting black-and-white book. Countries visited and researched include Turkey, Vietnam, Dominican Republic, spots in the South Pacific, Latin America, Europe. Political overtones. A few drawings of biodegradable kites of these countries, plus poems and flying tips. Softcover, 125 pp., \$42.95



**NEW! Drachen: Spiele mit dem Wind** (Kites: Playing with the Wind) by Rainer Neuner, in German. Attractive introductory book with drawings and color photos. Plans for 8 kites (including numerous genki variants) and 5 wind toys. Geared to light winds. Minimal appendixes. Hardcover, 131 pp., \$32.95



# The Kite Lines Bookstore . . . Continued

## From The UNITED STATES . . .

*The Penguin Book of Kites* by David Pelham. Called "The Bible," first published in 1976 and still recommended for all kitefliers. Plans for more than 100 kites plus solid, well-researched and -written aerodynamics and history. Color in half the book. Index and bibliography. Softcover, 228 pp., \$14.95



*Kiteworks* by Maxwell Eden. Revised edition. Hefty book with 50 kite plans (such as Yakko Stakk, Kaleidakite, Tri-D Box, Pterosaur) with detailed drawings based on material provided by respected designers. Sewing, aerodynamics, accessories and (un)related stories. Kite paintings, a few photos. Appendixes and index. Softcover, 287 pp., \$16.95



*Kite Precision* by Ron Reich. A strong foundation in stunt flying from a celebrated kiteflier. Fully detailed explanations of maneuvers Reich started that are now basic. Excellent sections on flying the Revolution and Flexifoil. Good introduction to team flying and choreography. Self-published with low-resolution photos, but lots of them. Touches of humor. Softcover, 182 pp., \$14.95

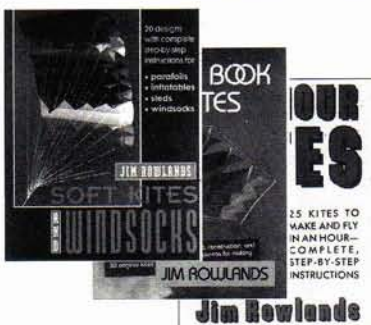


*The Art of the Japanese Kite* by Tal Streeter. Rare profiles of master kite artists of Japan sensitively interviewed in 1971-72, just before the waning of their traditional arts. Includes 130 photos (52 in color). No plans, but some background on Japanese-style kite building. A rich contemporary history and a true joy to read. Softcover, 181 pp., \$29.95



Books by David Gomberg are "homemade," lacking polish and photographs, but are useful to read: *Stunt Kites!* The first book on the subject. Thorough coverage of the basics plus advanced techniques. Maneuvers, tips, information and proven advice from 20 well-known sport fliers; lots of safety pointers. No kite plans or brand names. Softcover, 88 pp., \$11.95 *The Fighter Kite Book!* A good collection of information, mostly correct, about fighter flying. Though flat in tone, the book is a good starting source. Includes plans for a basic fighter. Beware drawings of brides. Softcover, 74 pp., \$8.95

Books by Jim Rowlands, though U.S.-published, contain British quirks; have a few color photos within otherwise black-and-white pages of line drawings; have book list and index: *Soft Kites and Windsocks*. Same as *British Kites and Windsocks*. The best and most popular work from Rowlands. Plans for 11 kites (including whale, frog, parafoil and Flow Form), 5 windsocks, 5 drogues and 2 bags. Softcover, 104 pp., \$14.95 *The Big Book of Kites*. Same as *British Making and Flying Modern Kites*. Plans for 36 kites all on the simple side, plus materials, techniques, an "evolution" of kites. Softcover, 127 pp., \$14.95 *One-Hour Kites*. Same as *British Kites to Make and Fly*. Plans for 25 basic kites, including oversimplified Facet and stunter kites. Somewhat overlaps with *The Big Book of Kites*. A reference (not a guide) for workshops. Softcover, 95 pp., \$14.95



*The Ultimate Kite Book* by Paul and Helene Morgan. If it weren't for the exaggerated title, this book would be easier to recommend. Colorfully done with high quality illustration and printing. Brief history; incomplete identification of kitemakers. Extensive photographs showing flying techniques. About six good kite plans, including a simple stunter and a tumbling star. Hardcover, 88 pp., \$19.95



Kite books by Wayne Hosking vary in appearance but suffer in the writing: *Kites*. Colorful, lavishly printed book of beautiful kite photos. Some good research on Asian kites. Kitemakers are unidentified. Absurd appendixes; 120 pp., \$15.95 *NEW! Kites to Touch the Sky*. A home-made black-and-white book containing plans for 32 basic plastic kites. Simple drawings, no photographs. Softcover, 96 pp., \$9.95



*Art That Flies* by Tal Streeter and Pamela Houk. An attractive anthology of unusual kites from a 1990 Dayton (Ohio) Art Institute exhibit, featuring works by three noted artists. Optical illusions, environmental works, interviews, interesting bibliography. No plans. Softcover, 139 pp., \$14.95

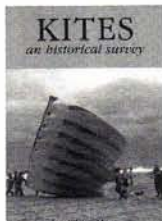


*Fighter Kites* by Philippe Gallot, in English. Plans for 29 kites, tips on flying, tools, materials, games, accessories. Clear illustrations, adequate instructions, plentiful enthusiasm. Watch out for metric conversions. Softcover, 96 pp., \$12.95

*Super Kites III* by Neil Thorburn. Many designs for delta-sled-box inventions of proven performance. Tested, creative techniques using mostly plastic bags and wooden dowels. Some color photos brighten this "completely handmade" book. Softcover, 123 pp., \$8.95



*Kites: An Historical Survey* by Clive Hart. Revised, second edition (1982). Invaluable reference work with many black-and-white illustrations and photos. Fascinating, readable, in-depth research in early kiting. The most extensive kite bibliography in print. No plans. *Limited supply*. Softcover, 210 pp., \$15.95

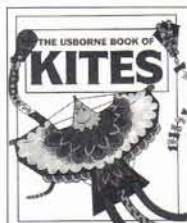


Kite books by Margaret Greger are clear, wise and reliable, ideal for beginner, expert or classroom: *Kites for Everyone*. Many good kite plans, variations and accessories, plus tips and techniques. Second edition. Softcover, 136 pp., \$12.95 *More Kites for Everyone*. Some old kites, some new kites, plus more tips. Plans for 17 kites, simple to complex. Softcover, 59 pp., \$9.95



*25 Kites That Fly* by Leslie Hunt. Reprint of the 1929 original. Good old-fashioned kites (shield, elephant, yacht, etc.) using paper and

wood. Has historical data and photos. Hunt was a kitemaker for the U.S. Weather Bureau. Softcover, 110 pp., \$3.95



gentle. Good introduction to materials, wind and flying. Many tips included. Softcover, 32 pp., \$5.95

*The Usborne Book of Kites* by Susan Mayes. Cute, colorful collection for kids. Six easy kites, with clear and fully illustrated step-by-step instructions. All measurements given in both metric and U.S. equivalent.



*Make Your Own Kite* (new kites) by John W. Jordan. Plans for nine original kites (Flying Saucer, Space Station, Crazy Cobra, Computer Card Kite, others) using unusual but mostly-easy-to-find materials such as plastic foam. Clear instructions and amusing reading from a genuine enthusiast. Black-and-white photos. Softcover edition out of print. *Limited supply of the hardcover edition*, 90 pp., \$14.95

*Make Your Own Kite* (new kites) by John W. Jordan. Plans for nine original kites (Flying Saucer, Space Station, Crazy Cobra, Computer Card Kite, others) using unusual but mostly-easy-to-find materials such as plastic foam. Clear instructions and amusing reading from a



by Temperature." Homemade layout and drawings. Scads of black-and-white photographs. Softcover, 100 pp., \$13.95

*Ski the Beach* by Stan Rogers. All you need to know about sand skiing with kites. The only book on this topic. Safety concerns explained throughout. Necessary beach conditions thoroughly illustrated. Loads of charts, including "How Wind Energy is Affected



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Ripstop; Modifying a Parachute; Stunting a Flow Form.

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New Zealand, Berlin, Washington (England); Parachute  
Stunter plans; Peter Lynn's Future Tech; Bobby Stanfield.

**WINTER 1990-91 (Vol. 8, No. 2)**

Dieppe, Montpellier, Bristol and Berlin; Stunt Kite Survey;  
D'Alto's Whitehead kite; Largest Eddy record.

**SPRING 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 3)**

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Pins; Angle Estimating; Wind Shot stunter plans.

**SUMMER-FALL 1991 (Vol. 8, No. 4)**

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plans; Painting Ripstop; Roberto Guidori.

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André Cassagnes; Thailand and the Natural Fibers Festival;

Christmas Island feats; Stunter Survey; George Peters.

**FALL 1992 (Vol. 9, No. 3)**

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Niagara Falls; Tangles; Ianuzzi's Featherlight; Kim Petersen.

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**SPRING 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 1)**

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of Ireland; quad-line Propeller; Jørgen Møller Hansen.

**SUMMER-FALL 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 2)**

Adrenaline tour of India; István Bodóczy's artistry; Carl  
Crowell's Cross Deck; Oldest U.S. Kite Festival (Iowa); Kites at  
the Pyramids; Tony Wolfenden.

**WINTER 1993 (Vol. 10, No. 3)**

North Sea events (Terschelling, Scheveningen, Fanø); Kite  
Camp Caravan; Rendez-Vous Mondial in Canada; Shragy's  
Butterflies; Wolfgang Schimmelpfennig.

**SPRING-SUMMER 1994 (Vol. 10, No. 4)**

Kite Sailing; South America: Colombia & Brazil; Buggy events  
+ Scoot Buggy & Wheels of Doom plans; Australia's Bondi  
Beach festival; Reza Ragheb.

**FALL 1994 (Vol. 11, No. 1)**

Shirone's New Museum; Korea and its fighters; Art & Ideas of  
Joan Montcada; Thailand International; Aerial Photographer  
George Lawrence; Jimmy Sampson.

**WINTER-SPRING 1995 (Vol. 11, No. 2)**

Dieppe; Hargrave commemoration; Stockholm's Drakfesten;  
spar study; new buggies; Streeter on Hiroshima; Shannon's  
cicada fighter; Alex Mason; Roger Maddy; Scott Skinner.



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The China trip (April 19-29, 1996) will include a tour of Shanghai, Xi'an, Beijing and will be highlighted by the fabulous Weifang International Kite Festival. Tour guides will be former AKA President David Gomberg and his wife Susan.

For further information about the festival or joining the tour contact Catch the Wind Kites at 503-994-9500.



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# Atlantic Crossing by Kite Power!

Article by Pierre Fabre / Photographs by Laurent Charpentier

**W**ho would have guessed that the first person to cross the Atlantic Ocean with a boat solely powered by kites would be a French mother of three and piano teacher by profession?

Nicole Van de Kerchove left the Canary Islands from Tenerife for her solitary crossing on February 8, 1995. She reached Pointe-à-Pitre on Guadeloupe islands on March 8, just 28 days later.

## Why she did it

Nicole's aim was only to demonstrate dramatically how kites could be used to replace a regular mast and sail: she felt she had to set an example. She speaks about her adventure with such modesty that it sounds as if anybody could have done it. But she is the first and only one.

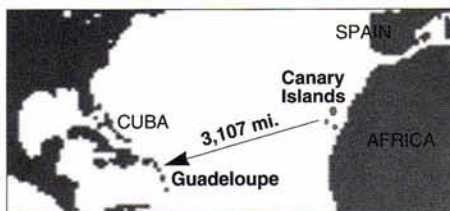
About 15 years ago, while crossing the Atlantic, her friends spent 11 days drifting in a dinghy before being rescued. At times they could see ships passing along the horizon, but they had no way to get closer to them and not one ship could spot them in the distance.

Nicole realized, "If they had only had a kite to tow their dinghy or to show their position, they would have been saved so much sooner. It then seemed so obvious to me that kites should be widely used in sailing."

She expected the idea would spread quicker than it has. But since nothing much happened,\* she thought she would prove what kites could do herself by crossing the Atlantic towed by kites. Nicole is an experienced sailor, having spent seven years in a round-the-world tour, so the challenge didn't seem too tough. She didn't have much experience in kitesurfing, but this was even better; she would show that any average sailor could



Above, Nicole Van de Kerchove launches one of the kites she uses in her crossing. A safety harness anchors her to the boat. Below, her route from the Canaries to the Guadeloupe islands.



use kites to power a boat if it lost its mast.

Within one year after making her decision, she launched a big soft kite from the deck of a 24-foot boat and headed west for a long run across the Atlantic.

## Turning the idea into reality

Despite a too-short period for experimenting, she had no fear whatsoever and no doubt that the kites would tow her all the way. Any tension she felt came from the fact that this was the first time she was sponsored: she knew all those who supported her expected her to succeed the first time.

Looking for these sponsors was the toughest and longest part of her project. Her estimated budget was 300,000 francs (\$60,000). She gathered about two-thirds of that amount and made do with it.

Nicole got her kites from Icare, an importer and distributor in La Rochelle. All the kites were custom-made from original designs by Sylvain Berthommé, well known in France for inventing *Mad Kyte*, a power stunter with a self-adjusting profile and simplified bridling. Sylvain is also a sailor and has experimented with kite sailing, having successfully crossed the English Channel a few years ago. Nicole relied on his technical expertise concerning kites.

## Challenges and techniques

Nicole patiently sailed a total of 2,700 nautical miles (3,107 miles) at an average speed of 4 knots (4.6 mph). Her highest speed was 7 knots (8 mph). The rather steady trade winds blew about 5 to 7½ knots (about 6–9 mph) favorable winds. Her boat, a JOD 24 (Jeanneau One Design) had no mast or sail. It was so small and lightweight it would constantly pitch and roll, which made it dangerous for her to stand on deck. Actually, falling off the boat was the greatest danger since there was nothing to cling to on its empty deck.

Nicole brought a total of eight kites, all based on the same design. Two of them she didn't use: a 10-square-meter (100-square-foot) dual-liner, not a practical option on a solitary sailing trip, and a 15-square-meter (150-square-foot) kite, too large for the fair winds that blew most of the time. Her other kites were a 4 square-meter (40 square-foot), the smallest and most suitable for strong winds; three 9 square-meters (90 square-footers), used the most; and two 12 square-meters (120 square-footers) that went up in lighter winds. Sometimes she put windsocks to the line to provide extra pull (and show sponsors' names).

She flew only one kite at a time, at the end of 300 to 500 meters (about 984 to 1,640 feet) of Dacron polyester line. Spectra line was sometimes used in light winds.

Nicole would launch a kite directly from her gloved hands after she harnessed herself and strapped her feet to the front deck. A strong safety line running from the back of her harness to the cabin allowed her to stand firm, slightly leaning forward, to prevent the kite from pulling her off the boat.

Of course, the kite's line was locked before launch and ran off the boat through a fixed pulley placed exactly where the mast would normally stand. Once the kite was up, she had to steer the boat and carefully watch the kite, but she also used an automatic steering system, a regular feature on most sailing boats.

## Keeping the kites up

The major problem? These kites lacked a device that would prevent them from filling

\*Underpublicized examples notwithstanding, for instance: Samoans in canoes ca. 1700; Pocock with boat, 1828; Cody with canoe, 1903; Gillett with sailboat, 1975; Stewart with catamaran, 1977; Locke and Carter with catamaran, 1982; Eisaman with inflatable, four times (four of the Great Lakes), 1987–1988—all solely under kite power, traversing bodies of water of known distances up to 130 miles. (Details from "A Brief Chronology of Kite Traction," *Kite Lines*, Winter 1992-93.)



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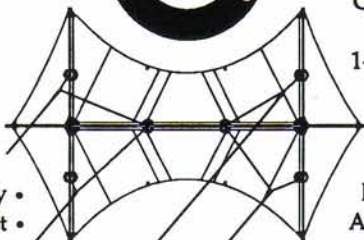
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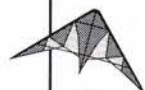
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## FOR THE RECORD . . . Continued



**Nicole's kite at a  
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up with water if they  
fell in the ocean.

On the first day of  
her travel, Nicole lost  
the first of her 9-  
square-meter kites. It  
dove and sank in the  
water after a bridle  
line broke. Pulling  
then over a ton, the  
drowned kite was so  
heavy on her winch that all the other bridle  
lines broke before Nicole could get hold of it.  
She lost a second 9-square-meter kite the  
same way just a few days before she arrived.

These single-liners, the only kites she  
had, were not as stable in flight as Nicole  
expected—I believe because their design  
was directly derived from the Mad Kite, a  
dual-liner. Maybe all they needed was a  
drogue. They had a strange tendency to  
dive and then climb up again. Nicole dis-  
covered that once this behavior started, it  
would repeat and only get worse. It became  
a sign that it was time to retrieve the kite  
before it took a bath.

### A first in long-distance kite sailing

After her trip, Nicole regretted not bringing  
several kinds of kites to test for efficiency,  
safety and ease of handling. She thought of  
some improvements that could be made  
on the kites, for instance, fitting inflatable  
ribs in some of the cells or attaching a spe-  
cial retrieving line to the back of the kite.

Nicole is a pragmatic person: she doesn't  
believe kites will ever offer the same per-  
formance and convenience as a mast and  
sails. And she doesn't think a lone sailor can  
kite-sail upwind across an ocean.

But she is an enthusiastic promoter of  
kites as emergency gear. She thinks highly  
visible kites can help rescuers spot a lost  
boat or dinghy, or power a boat when the  
wind is so strong all sails must be lowered.  
A kite pulling on the stern can steady a  
boat during a storm. It would keep the  
boat's bow into the wind so big waves don't  
hit the boat's side and turn it over. Such a  
steading kite would make it easier to jury  
rig a mast or sail during a storm.

Thanks to her success, Nicole hopes to  
convince sailors that kites can save lives. Her  
real victory will be when kites are compul-  
sory safety equipment for every survival  
boat or dinghy.



# News, Rumors & Miscellany

**SURPRISING BUT HAPPY NEWS:** The National Air & Space Museum, Washington, DC is doing some new



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Detail of Lartigue photo of Louis and Hubert Laroze, Rouzat, France, 1911. During the holidays, the Lartigue family gathered at their country mansion of Rouzat and gave free rein to their imagination. This kite was made by Lartigue's father, Henri.

things with kites. First, they are scheduling an exhibit titled "Flights of Fancy: Photographs by Jacques-Henri Lartigue, 1904-1922" circulated by The American Federation of Arts. Most of us have seen Lartigue photos in pages of kite books, but did we realize that Lartigue was only 10 years old when he took his first picture? (It was of the first glider flight by French aviator Gabriel Voisin.) And did we know that by age 15 Lartigue had taken more than 1,000 photographs of early flying machines (including kites)? Or did we realize that Lartigue kept a detailed journal describing what he had photographed—and that by the time of his death in 1986 he had written 116 volumes? This amazing display runs from September 30, 1995 to March 3, 1996. Admission is free.

Second, on October 21, 1995 two workshops on kite aerial photography will be led by Craig

**CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? THE** East Coast Stunt Kite Championships is 10 years old. So the organizers wanted something BIG. "Bring on the Flow Forms," they said. And at the designated hour a record number of 30 of the big 252-square-foot kites flew together over the otherwise gray beach at Wildwood, New Jersey on Memorial Day weekend. Also impressive were the Wild Wheels Buggy Blast before the event and the 2nd Annual Indoor Ballet Competition afterward. "The energy was high," said Howard Lamhut of Freehold,

New Jersey. "They were doing things you couldn't imagine possible." The top Indoor winner was young Curtiss Mitchell of Daytona Beach, Florida flying a Synergy Deca quad-liner to a cheering audience in a tricky setting with a low-hanging ballroom light in the middle of the ceiling. Indoor flying is now a standard feature at several leading events. And where did we see it first? Wildwood.



Wildwood '95: A record 30 big Flow Form kites fly en masse. Inset, Curtiss Mitchell shows great control in the Indoor event.

HOWARD LAMHUT

## The Rare & Strange

**T**HE ONE ON: A BLEARY-EYED 11-foot "Yosemite Sam" kite with necktie drogue was one of the sensations of the big, well-funded and well-attended Ocean Shores Festival of Colors Kite Challenge (even the name is big!) in Washington state this May. Dick Curran of Puyallup engineered Sam's complex structure and flight mechanics.



**The Aladino Sabre Quad from Italy cuts across the sky.**

**L**AID BACK IN SOUTH CAROLINA? Not hardly—at least not during the Myrtle Beach Spring Games Sky Festival this April. The competition was hotly contested, especially in quad-line. An unusual item of equipment was the vicious-looking Aladino Sabre Quad (above) made in Italy. A sword fight between two of the kites was performed by T.C. Powers and Alex Mason of Savannah, Georgia.

**F**LYING IN THE TEETH OF THE wind: It's a 20-foot winged inflatable dragon made by Harald Weissgerber of Ravensburg, Germany. He based the kite on one by Geert Donker Duyvis of Delft, The Netherlands. "Much admired in kiting circles," Harald says.



Above left, Yosemite Sam kite by Dick Curran. Left and below, Harald Weissgerber's dragon kite flying and baring its teeth.



Wilson and Brooks Leffler. There are fees and class size is limited. Contact: Barbara Herrick, National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560; telephone: 202-633-8926.

**H**URRICANE FELIX MADE IT dicey this year, but saving turtles is a way of life at the Caribbean Kite Company in Jamaica. Turtles are endangered there because of beach erosion, natural predators (such as crabs) and the local belief that turtle eggs are an aphrodisiac. About 10 people are recruited in July and August when the turtles land on the

beaches and lay their eggs. The volunteers lift the eggs carefully from their nests (about 120 eggs per nest) and bring them to a special holding tank at the kite factory where the temperature is right for hatching. Stormy waves destroyed many nests this year, but still many eggs were saved. And if you're in the factory on the right day about 8-10 weeks later, you'll hear the eggs cracking and see the turtles rush to the surface, "like a volcano," according to Susan Baker, partner in the company and chief turtle keeper. "The whole place gets excited," she says. "We don't make another kite for the day." ◇



# SKYGALLERY

Pierre Fabre



1



2



3



4

## Kites by Pierre Fabre:

1. Anonyme: 1993, 24x13 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing
2. Nuclear Mackerel: 1994, 21x6 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing
3. Cycl'Hop: 1990, 27x20 ft + 265 ft windsock tail, ripstop nylon and fiberglass tubing
4. La Puce: 1992, 4x1.5 ft, Japanese handmade paper and bamboo
5. Nord-Sud: 1990, 33x6 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing
6. Red Eye: 1990, 6x3 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing
7. Untitled: 1992, 2x2 ft, Japanese handmade paper and bamboo
8. N°9: 1987, 33x20 ft, ripstop nylon and fiberglass tubing, flying with Normandie: 1992, 21x14 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing
9. Bee: 1994, 5x5 ft, ripstop nylon and carbon tubing





**Kitemaker:** Pierre Fabre, Paris, France

**Occupation:** Bored illustrator, enthusiastic kite artist.

**Kiteflying experience:** My interest arose after reading Pelham's *Penguin Book of Kites*. I don't have any special need to fly kites very often, but I am concerned more and more about where to fly them.

**Kiteflying experience:** Made first original and large kites in 1986. My work with kites is a slow process—I often wait a couple of years for my designs to mature before I actually make kites from them.

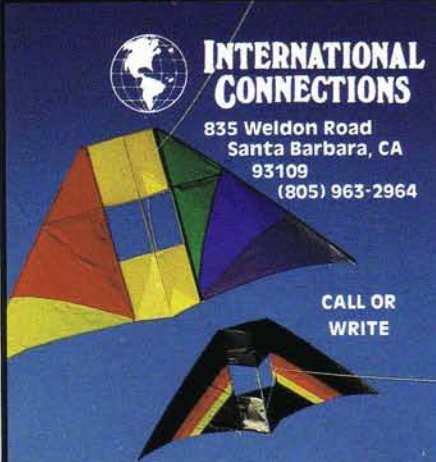
**Experience as a "kite entomologist":** I began traveling thanks to a trip won at the Dieppe festival. I have visited 13 countries, met hundreds of kitemakers and taken over 20,000 slides.

**Philosophy of kitemaking:** I always need to keep my mind and hands busy and kitemaking allows for a mix of intellectual, artistic, technical and manual work. I'm realizing that the more kites I see, the more difficult it is to come up with new and original ideas. From time to time I try to look back and analyze what I've made to define a precise direction to work in—yet the scope of creation through kites is so wide I have always failed to stick to a single concept.

**Photographers:** No. 3 by Icare, all others by Pierre Fabre

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